The journey of Balsa, the female bodyguard

闇の声

やみ

Moribito II: Guardian of the Darkness

Volume One

Story by Nahoko Uehashi
Comicalized by Yu

原作◉上橋菜穂子
漫画◉結布

Nemuki+ Comics

朝日新聞出版

Published by Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc.

1

Yami no Moribito

"Guardian of the Darkness"

By Uehashi Nahoko

Illustrated by Yuu

Scanlation:
Lovely Strange Dark
lsd.mangadex.com

Chapter One

Raws: Kalendel
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SNIFF

SNIFF

UFF

AOGIRI MOUNTAINS, THE NEW YOGO EMPIRE

IT'S BEEN 25 YEARS SINCE THEN...

AT THE OTHER END

IS THE KINGDOM OF KANBAL...

RIGHT AT THE FIRST FORK,

RIGHT AT THE SECOND,

AND LEFT AT THE THIRD...

Splash

Splash

WELL THEN, TIME TO GO.

THE KINGDOM OF KANBAL

UNDERNEATH THE YUSA MOUNTAIN RANGE IS A LABYRINTH OF CAVES

IS A MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY THAT RUNS ALONG THE YUSA MOUNTAIN RANGE, KNOWN AS THE "MOTHER RANGE".

SPREAD OUT LIKE A SPIDER'S WEB.

IT IS BELIEVED THAT WITHIN THE DEPTHS OF THESE CAVES LIES THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS, RULED BY THE "KING OF THE MOUNTAINS".

FOR THE CHILDREN OF KANBAL, ENTERING THE CAVES WAS A SIGN OF GREAT COURAGE.

AS THE CHILDREN OF KANBAL FOUND OUT ABOUT THE CAVES,

THEY WERE STRONGLY FORBIDDEN BY THEIR ELDERS TO ENTER THEM.

HOWEVER, OVER THE YEARS, A FEW CHILDREN WHO ENTERED THE CAVES AS A TEST OF COURAGE

NEVER CAME BACK.

THE FEARSOME GUARDIAN OF DARKNESS?

OR BECAUSE THEY WERE EATEN BY HYOHLU,

WAS IT BECAUSE THEY LOST THEIR WAY IN THE WEB OF CAVES?

IF YOU CARRY A TORCH, HE WILL NOTICE IT AND ATTACK YOU.

HYOHLU DOESN'T LIKE FIRE.

Splash

splash

Splash

splash

DROP

DROP

BALSA... DON'T BRING ANY KIND OF LIGHT INTO THE CAVE.

JIGURO...

MY FATHER, KARUNA, WAS A MAN WHO LOVED TO TALK AND LAUGH.

HIS GOOD FRIEND, JIGURO MUSA, WAS A QUIET MAN.

THEY HAD COMPLETELY OPPOSITE PERSONALITIES BUT GOT ALONG INCREDIBLY WELL TOGETHER.

MY FATHER WAS DOCTOR TO THE KING OF KANBAL.

ACCORDING TO JIGURO, MY FATHER WAS AN EXCEPTIONALLY TALENTED DOCTOR WHO CAUGHT THE KING'S ATTENTION

AND STARTED TO SERVE AS HIS DOCTOR AT THE YOUNG AGE OF 32.

WHEN THE KING'S FOUR SONS WERE OF AGE, THEY STARTED FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO THE THRONE.

AND THE ELDEST SON, NAGURU, ASCENDED THE THRONE.

BUT THEN THE KING DIED FROM A SUDDEN ILLNESS,

KING NAGURU WAS A SICKLY MAN, AND ONE WINTER HE CAUGHT A COLD THAT LEFT HIM IN HIS SICKBED EVEN AS SUMMER CAME.

HE WAITED FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT TO PUT HIS PLAN INTO ACTION.

THE SECOND OLDEST SON, ROGSAM, WAS A HORRIBLE MAN. EVEN AS HE WITHDREW HIS CHALLENGE FOR THE THRONE,

HOWEVER, KING NAGURU'S REIGN DID NOT LAST LONG.

HE THREATENED MY FATHER. "IF THE POISON FAILS, OR IF ANYONE FINDS OUT ABOUT THIS, YOUR DAUGHTER WILL BE KILLED IMMEDIATELY."

ROGSAM SECRETLY ORDERED MY FATHER TO KILL KING NAGURU WITH POISON.

SERVED POISON TO KING NAGURU.

MY FATHER, WHO KNEW OF ROGSAM'S DEPRAVITY,

JIGURO WAS LIVING AT THE CASTLE AT THE TIME AS A MARTIAL ARTS INSTRUCTOR.

MY FATHER FOUND AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH HIS FRIEND JIGURO.

AS THE DAYS WENT BY AND THE KING GOT WEAKER,

SINCE HE LOST MY MOTHER TO AN ILLNESS, I WAS THE ONLY ONE HE HAD LEFT.

MY FATHER TOLD JIGURO EVERYTHING AND ASKED HIM TO TAKE ME AND RUN AWAY.

"AND BECAUSE HE IS ROGSAM, HE WOULDN'T JUST KILL ME. I'M SURE HE'D KILL BALSA TOO."

"ONCE THE KING DIES, THERE'S NO REASON FOR ROGSAM TO KEEP ME ALIVE. I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH."

I STILL REMEMBER CLEARLY

WHAT HAPPENED THAT NIGHT WHEN I WAS SIX YEARS OLD.

JIGURO ABANDONED HIS LIFE AS HE KNEW IT TO FULFILL HIS FRIEND'S WISHES.

MY FATHER HADN'T BEEN HOME FROM THE CASTLE FOR DAYS,

AND I WAS AT HOME WITH MY OLD NURSEMAID WAITING FOR HIM TO RETURN.

THUD!

UGHH...

!?

glance

BUT MY NURSE-MAID...

B...

YOUR FATHER ASKED ME TO TAKE YOU AND RUN AWAY.

RUSTLE

YOU'RE COMING WITH ME RIGHT NOW.

GRAB

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE, YOU'LL DO AS I SAY.

LOOK AT THAT MAN. HE WAS HIDING ACROSS THE CANAL,

WAITING FOR THE CHANCE TO KILL YOU.

YOU CAN'T TELL HER.

IF SHE FINDS OUT ABOUT YOU AND ME RUNNING AWAY, SHE'S GOING TO BE IN TROUBLE TOO.

AH...

MY SHOES...

...THEY'RE TOO BIG.

YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE DO.

BACK THEN I HAD NO IDEA THAT IT WAS ONLY
THE BEGINNING OF OUR LONG JOURNEY ON THE RUN.

LIFE ON THE RUN WITH JIGURO WAS LIKE HELL.

HALF A YEAR AFTER OUR ESCAPE, WE HEARD NEWS THAT MY FATHER, KARUNA, WAS KILLED IN A ROBBERY.

I HAD ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT I WOULD SEE HIM AGAIN...

TEACH ME HOW TO FIGHT!

JIGURO,

I'LL GET MY REVENGE !!

RUB

GRAB

ABOUT WHY I HAD TO RUN AWAY WITH HIM.

JIGURO TALKED TO ME LIKE AN ADULT AND TOLD ME EVERYTHING

WOMEN CAN'T FIGHT.

.....NO.

GRAB

JIGURO WORKED AS A BODYGUARD FOR RICH MERCHANTS TO SUPPORT OUR LIFE ON THE RUN,

AND I STUDIED HIM INTENSELY AND COPIED HIS MOVE-MENTS.

WOOSH

RUSTLE

ONE DAY, ONE OF ROGSAM'S HUNTERS FOUND US.

CLINK

BALSA! RUN!!

WHOOSH

CLANK

WHOOSH

WHOOSH

STAB

HE'S JUST AS SKILLED AS JIGURO...

JIGURO...

!!

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM CRY.

THAT HUNTER WAS ONE OF HIS DEAREST FRIENDS.

YAH!

HA!

I'LL TEACH YOU

HOW TO FIGHT.

YOUR FOOT IS FACING THE WRONG WAY!

GO FORWARD!

UGH!

whap

whap

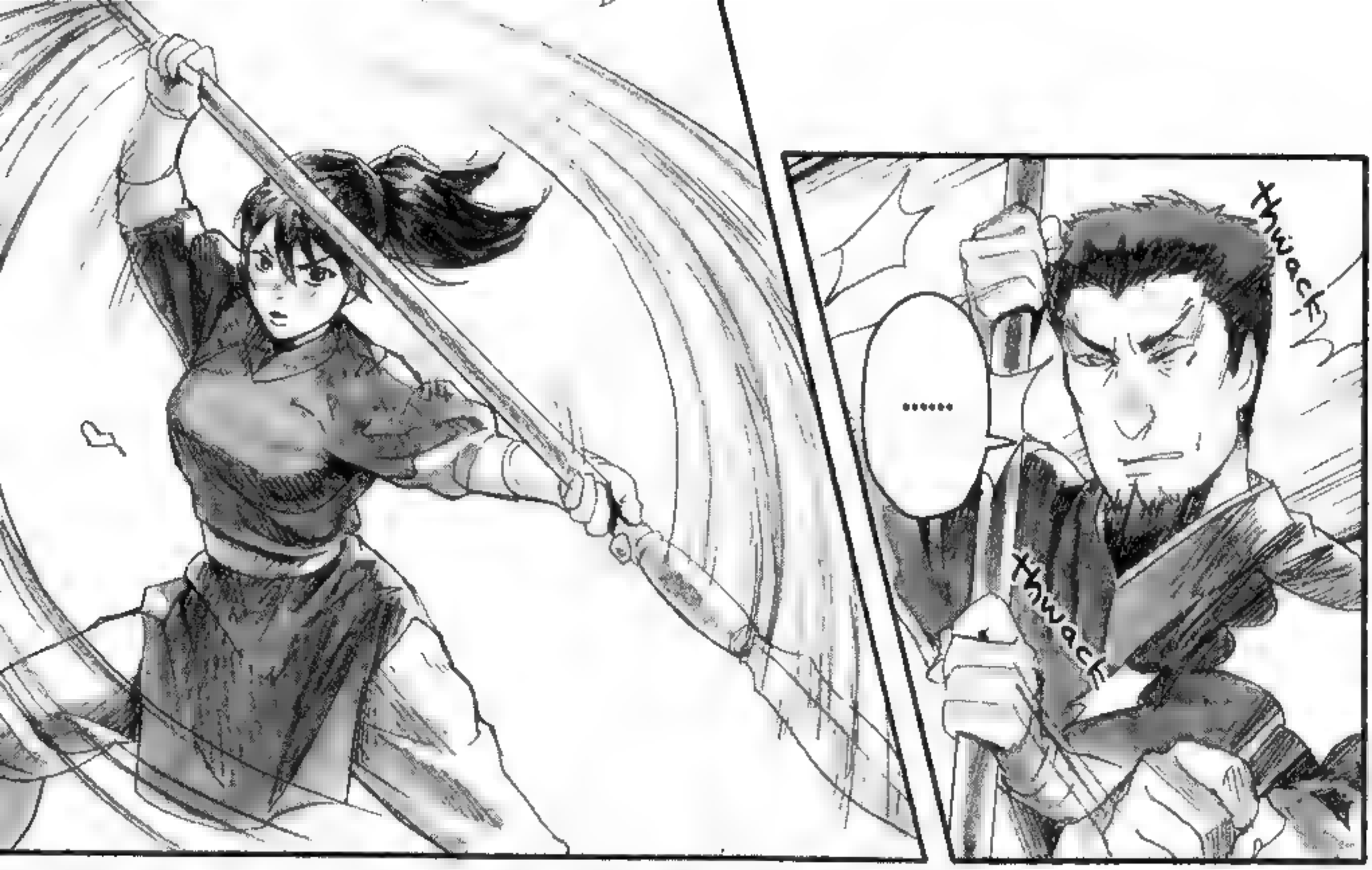
YOUR RIGHT SIDE IS OPEN.

LOOSEN YOUR HIPS!

bzzz

FARTHER!

WHOOSH


KHWACK!
.....
KHWACK!

YOU'RE A NATURAL AT THIS.

.....

PERHAPS IT WAS FATE
THAT YOU LEARNED HOW TO FIGHT.

TO STRENGTHEN YOUR WILL TO SURVIVE.

THE ONLY THING I CAN DO FOR YOU FROM HERE ON IS TO TOUGHEN YOU UP,

JIGURO WAS STRONG.

HE REALLY WAS STRONGER THAN ANYBODY ELSE.

HE KILLED EIGHT OF HIS DEAR FRIENDS

IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.

IN THOSE 15 YEARS BEFORE ROGSAM DIED,

I'M GOING TO GET LOST IF I DON'T STAY ALERT...

plop

HA!

grow!

!!

clink

I NEVER THOUGHT THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN I'D HAVE TO USE IT.

THIS PATTERN SHOWS THE DIRECTION AROUND THE BRANCHES IN THE CAVE.

WHEN JIGURO DIED, I HAD A COPY MADE.

AT THE FIRST FORK...

RETRACING THIS PATH I TRAVERSED WITH JIGURO 25 YEARS AGO

BECAME A STUPID OBSESSION.

IT'S DARK...

Creeak

SOME-THING FEELS ODD...

THEN LEFT.

TURN RIGHT.

THE EXIT SHOULD BE ON THE LEFT SIDE...

THIS SMELL...

sniff

YOU CAN'T BRING A TORCH INSIDE THE CAVES.

A TORCH...?

!?

dash

A CHILD'S VOICE?!

tyrn

KYAAAAAAAA!

dash

!?

ズズズ

...WHAT THE?

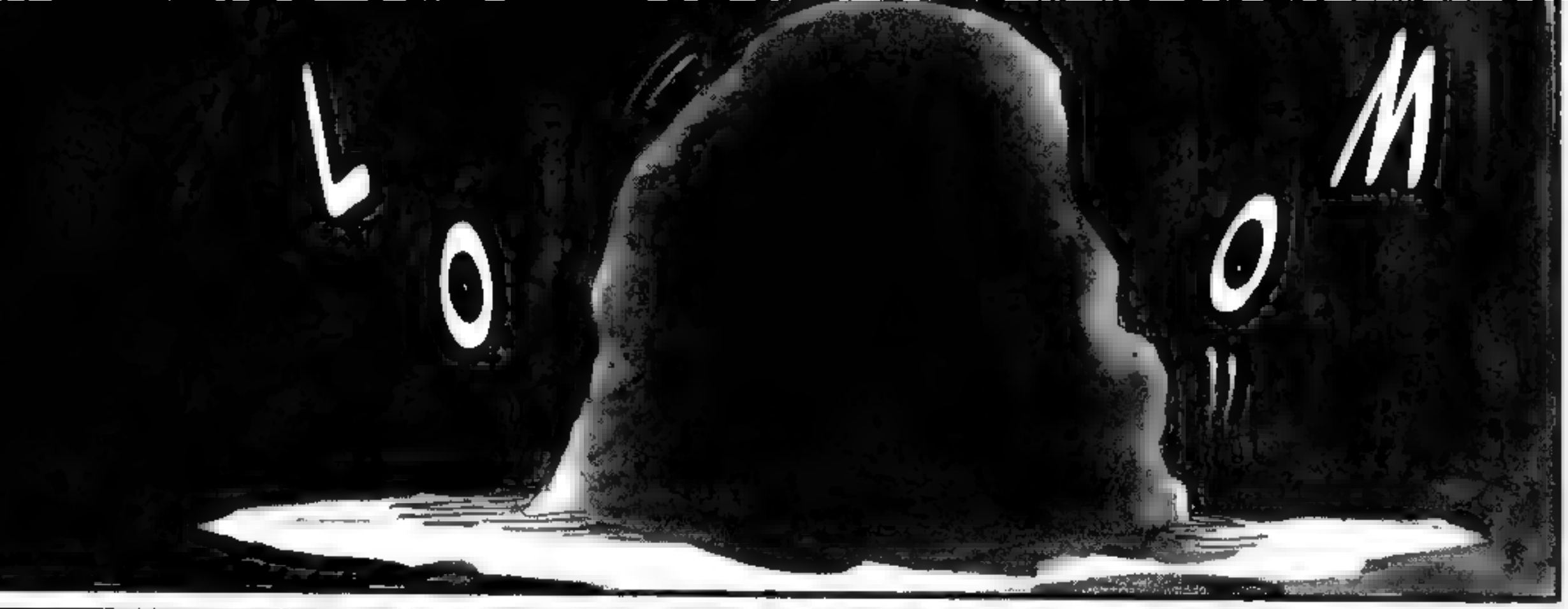
WAH...

tremble

?
?
...!
SHHH!
KEEP QUIET.

WHAT DID YOU...?!

HYOHLU... OVER THERE... IT...
M—
MY SISTER...!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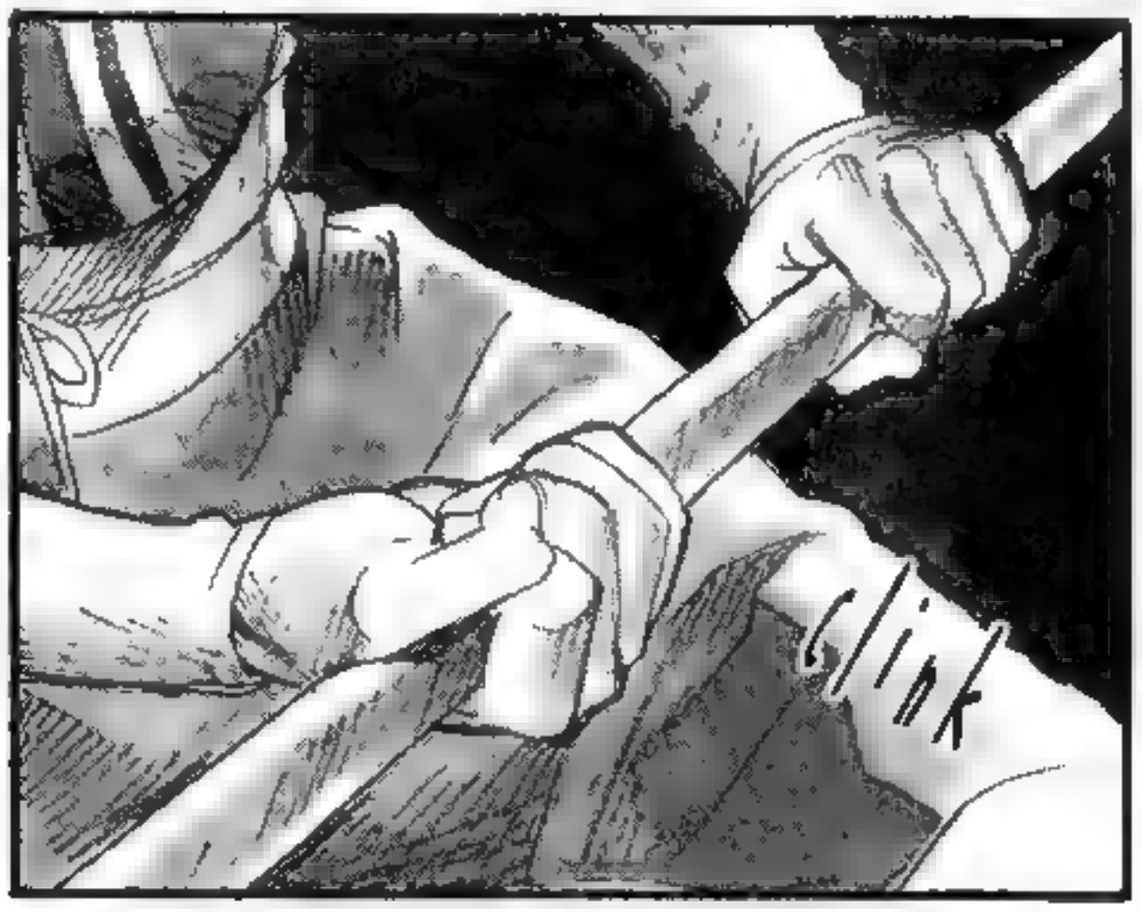

Glink

IS THIS

SWISH

HYOHLU?

7"

WHOOSH

!!

THUMP

THUMP

UGH!

TCH!

WHAP

HSOOHH...

tap

whap

thud

charge

WHOOSH!

clang

clang

SWOOSH

WHAT IS THIS...?

IT'S ALMOST LIKE HE'S DANCING.

HIS WHOLE BODY IS IN TUNE WITH HIS MOVE-MENTS.

IT'S STRANGE.

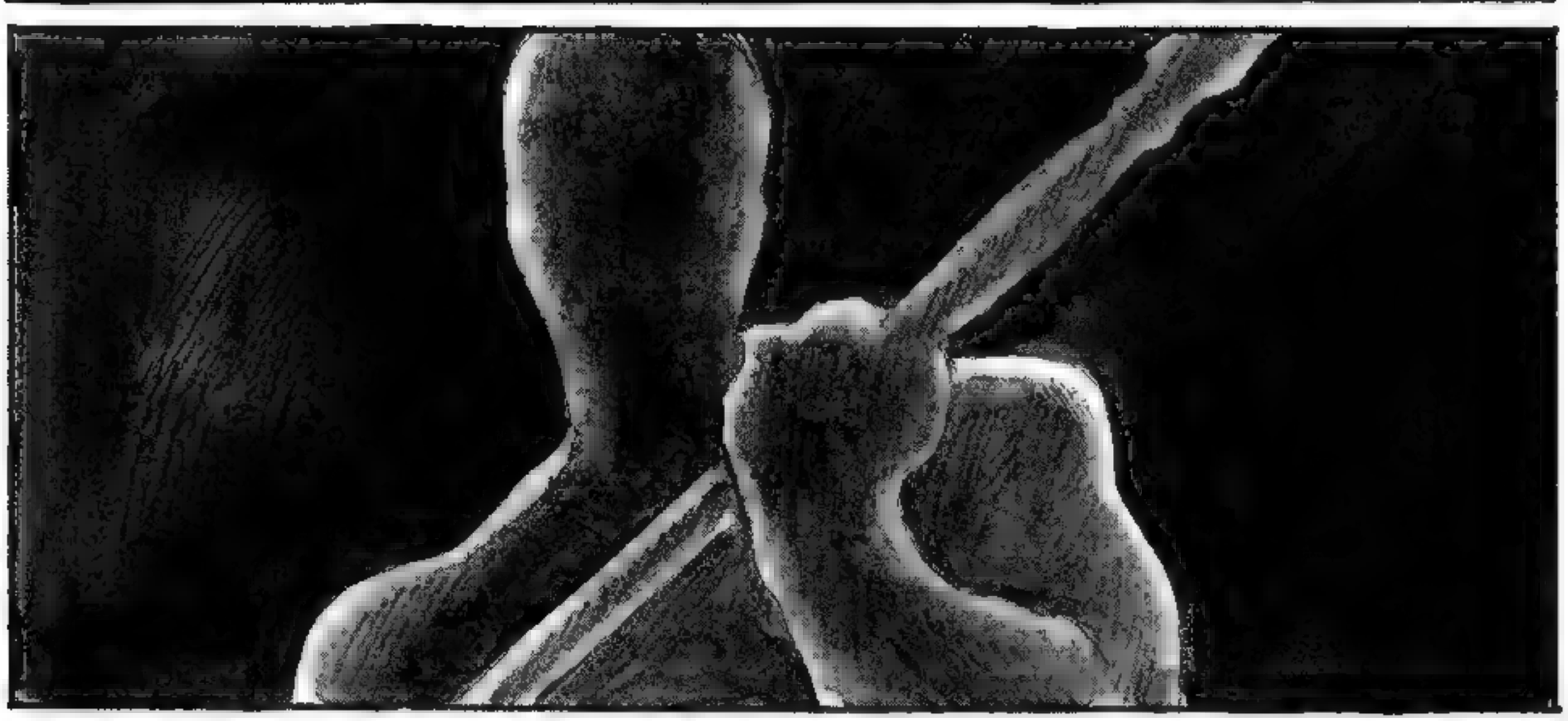
NOSTALGIC...

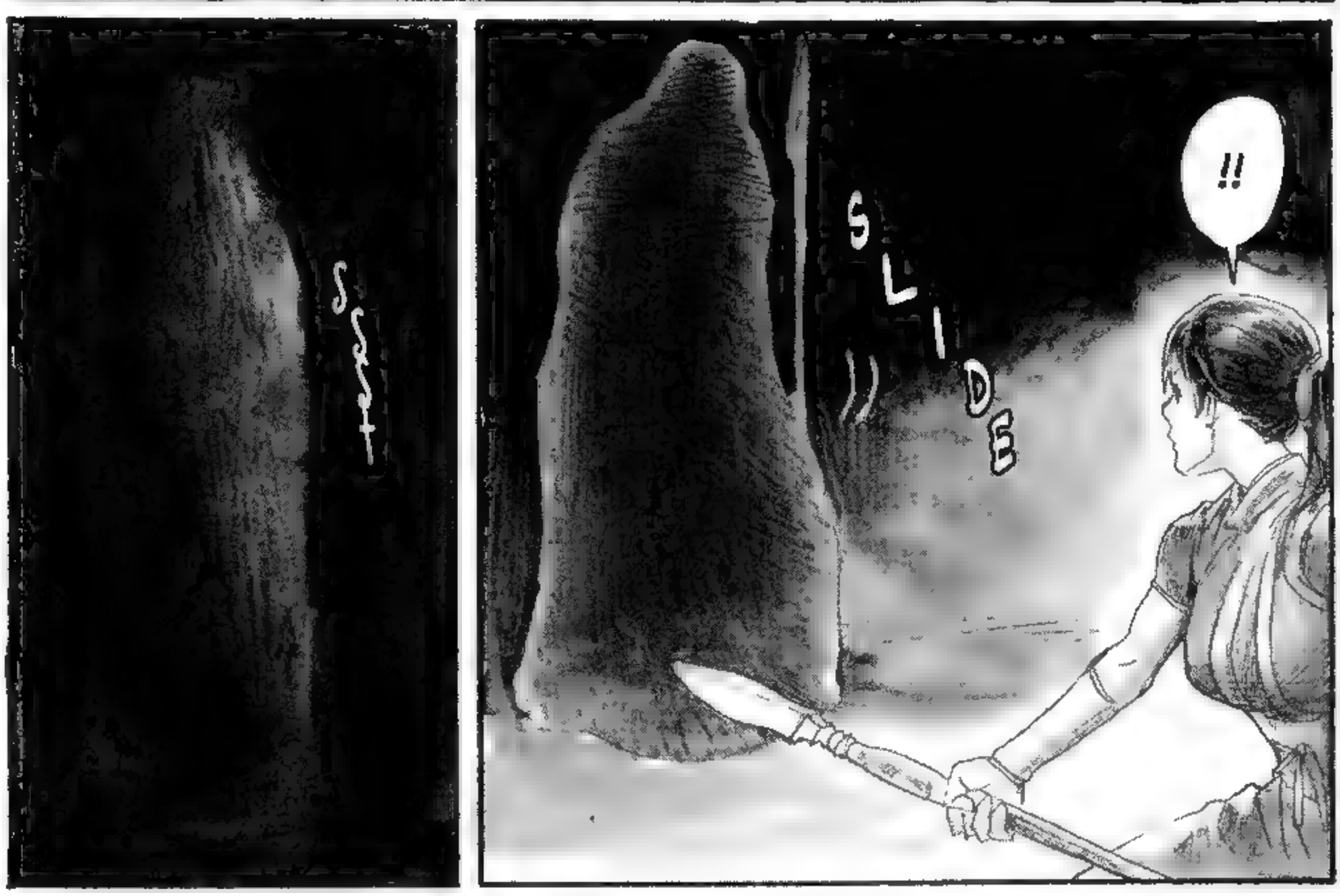
I REMEMBER THIS FROM LONG AGO.....

HUFF...

.....

BUT IN REALITY IT'S ONLY BEEN A SINGLE BREATH.
IT'S LIKE THAT FEELING STRETCHED ON AND ON,




SSSS
SLIDE
!!

JUST WHAT WAS THAT...?

IT DIDN'T FEEL LIKE I WAS FIGHTING TO THE DEATH WITH HYOHLU.

IT LEFT LIKE I WAS SOMEHOW COMMUNICATING WITH HYOHLU WITHOUT WORDS.

WHAT A STRANGE FEELING...

THAT WAS... "SPEAR-DANCING".

clench

....UGH!

AH!

WHILE I WAS TRAINING WITH JIGURO.

IT WAS LIKE OUR SKILLS INTERTWINED AND FLOWED AS ONE.

I FELT IT JUST ONCE BEFORE, LONG AGO,

FWOOSH

.....

THIS IS "SPEAR-DANCING".

...YOU'VE GOTTEN SO SKILLED...

WAS THAT JIGURO,

NOT HYOHLU?

gulp

URGH...

JIGURO HAS BEEN DEAD FOR SIX YEARS.

I DUG HIS GRAVE WITH MY OWN HANDS.

I'M BEING FOOLISH.

URGH...

ARE YOU HURT?

IT'S OKAY, HYOHLU IS GONE.

STEP

grab

GINA?

MY FOOT HURTS...

KASSA!

GINA!

ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!

I'LL CARRY HER ON MY BACK.

YOU HOLD ONTO MY SPEAR AND FOLLOW QUIETLY.

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

WOUNDS GET DEEPER THE MORE YOU TRY TO FORGET THEM.

THROUGHOUT MY LIFE, I'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO FORGET MY HOMETOWN

BECAUSE I CONSIDER IT AN OLD WOUND.

AH,

BUT...

WE'RE OUT!

LOOK!

TO CONFRONT THOSE OLD SCARS HEAD ON.

I'VE RETURNED

I FELT LIKE I HAD TO DO IT.

I WANTED TO GO THROUGH THE CAVES AND REACH MY HOME-TOWN NO MATTER WHAT.

IT'S THE KINGDOM OF KANBAL!

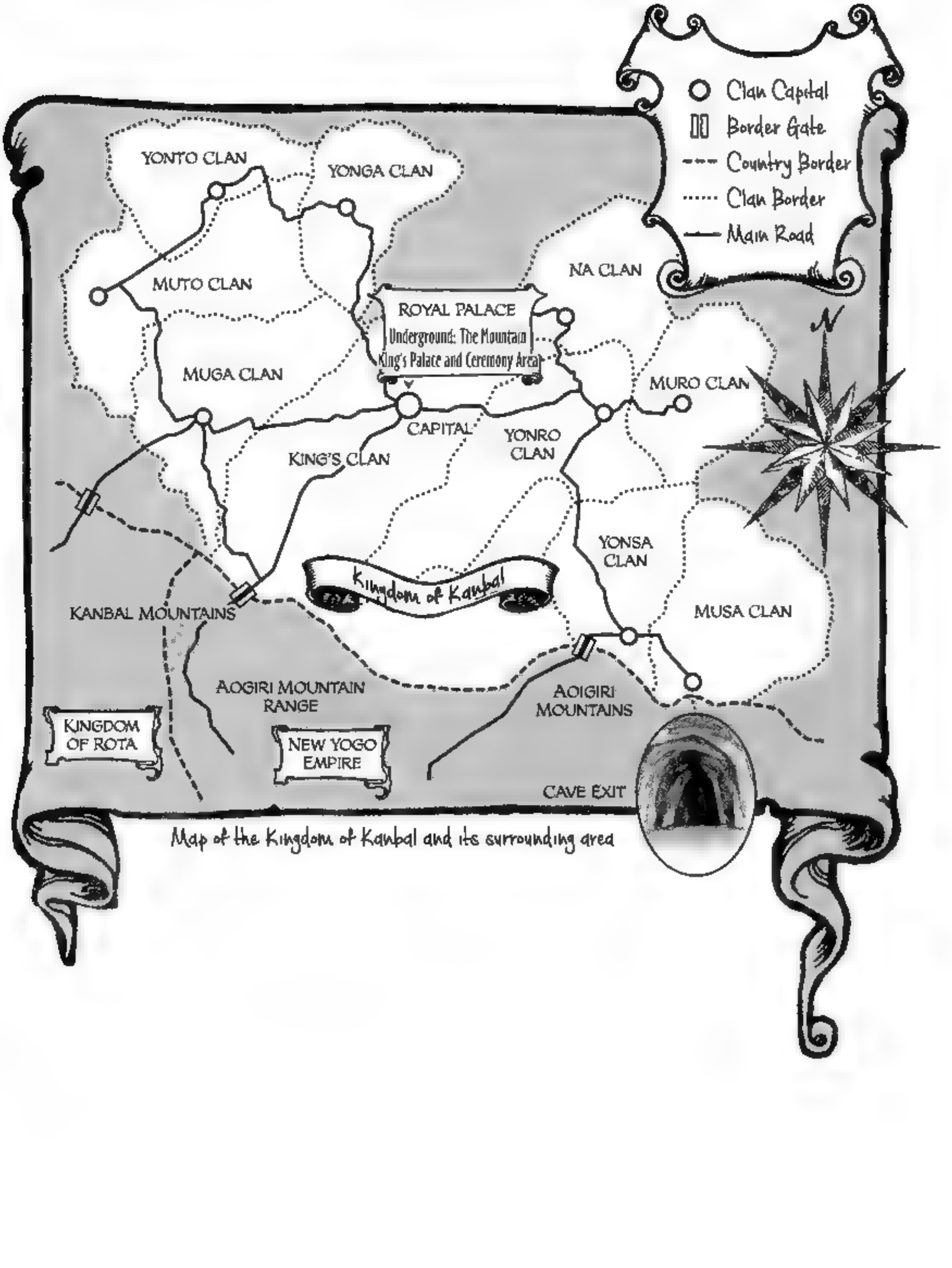
The journey of Balsa
the female bodyguard

YAMI NO MORIBITO 1

THIS IS THE MANGA ADAPTATION OF THE SECOND NOVEL IN UEHASHI NAHOKO'S *MORIBITO* SERIES. THE FIRST NOVEL IN THE SERIES, *SEIREI NO MORIBITO*, HAS BOTH ANIME AND MANGA ADAPTATIONS.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE AUTHOR, YOU CAN PURCHASE THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE NOVELS THEMSELVES.

SCHOLASTIC HAS RELEASED VOLUME ONE AS *MORIBITO: GUARDIAN OF THE SPIRIT* AND VOLUME TWO AS *MORIBITO: GUARDIAN OF THE DARKNESS*.



Map of the Kingdom of Kanbal and its surrounding area

Yami no Moribito

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Chapter Two

Raws: Kalendel
Translation: Den
Editing: Samara &
Nutritious Milk
QC: Ianu

YAMI NO MORIBITO
CHAPTER 2

.....

YOU PUT YOUR SISTER'S LIFE IN DANGER.

ESPECIALLY NOW THAT YOU'VE COME OF AGE AND RECEIVED YOUR DAGGER.

YOU SHOULDN'T BE TAKING YOUR SISTER ON A TEST OF COURAGE,

BUT

A HAKUMA...

HE DIDN'T.

I WAS THE ONE WHO CAME HERE TO GET A HAKUMA, NOT MY BROTHER.

GO DEEPER INSIDE, AND THERE ARE WALLS OF TRANSLUCENT WHITE STONES CALLED "HAKUMA".

BEYOND THAT ARE WALLS OF GREEN STONES CALLED "LYOKUHAKU".

AS YOU GO DEEPER INSIDE THE DARK CAVE RULED BY THE "KING OF THE MOUNTAINS,"

THE FORMATIONS CHANGE.

IS SAID TO HAVE LUISHA STONES, WHICH EMIT A BLUISH LIGHT.

AND THE PALACE OF THE MOUNTAIN KING, IN THE FURTHEST DEPTHS OF THE CAVE,

HE LAUGHED AT US AND KEPT ON BRAGGING ABOUT HIS FATHER'S POSITION.

THE CLAN LEADER HAS A SON WHO'S AWFUL.

IS GETTING A HAKUMA PROOF OF COURAGE FOR THESE KIDS...?

IF WE WENT AND TRIED TO GET A HAKUMA, WE'D NEVER FIND OUR WAY BACK...

HE SAID THAT SINCE WE'RE NOTHING BUT MEMBERS OF A BRANCH FAMILY,

THAT'S WHY I...

IT'S SAID THAT THE CLAN LEADER'S WARRIOR BLOOD RUNS FROM FATHER TO SON.

THE BLOODLINE THAT RUNS IN HIS DAUGHTER IS CALLED THE BRANCH LINE AND IS NOT CONSIDERED PART OF THE CHIEF'S BLOODLINE.

EACH OF THOSE NOBLE FAMILIES IS LED BY A CLAN LEADER.

IN THE KINGDOM OF KANBAL, THERE IS A SEPARATION BETWEEN THE KING'S ROYAL FAMILY AND THE NINE NOBLE FAMILIES.

...I SEE. I UNDER-STAND WHY YOU DID IT,

BUT IT'S NOT WORTH RISKING YOUR LIFE FOR.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THESE CAVES.

BADUMP

ftoooo

YOU BOTH NEARLY DIED TONIGHT.

sh

pat

DON'T EVER GO INSIDE THESE CAVES AGAIN.

.....WE WON'T.

YES. MY NAME IS KASSA. I'M THE SON OF TONNO FROM THE MUSA CLAN.

MY SISTER HERE IS GINA.

OKAY,

IS YOUR VILLAGE NEARBY?

SO THAT'S WHY JIGURO KNEW THE CAVE SO WELL.

I SEE.

JIGURO WAS FROM THE MUSA CLAN.

ARE YOU FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY?

YOUR ACCENT'S ALSO...

THOSE LOOK LIKE CLOTHES FROM THAT NEW YOGO EMPIRE OR SOMETHING.

UM,

.....

IS THIS WHAT THEY CALL THE THREAD OF FATE?

BUT I WENT AWAY ON A LONG JOURNEY.

NO, I WAS BORN IN KANBAL.

AH.....

SO I CAN'T TELL THEM OUTRIGHT.

BUT THAT REASON HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH A DEVIOUS PLOT IN THE ROYAL FAMILY.

AND TELL THEM THE REAL REASON WHY JIGURO HAD TO RUN AWAY.

IF I COULD, I'D LIKE TO MEET WITH JIGURO'S FAMILY

KASSA AND GINA, RIGHT?

I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK.

!!

HOW ABOUT IT? PLEASE COME WITH US.

WHY NOT? IF YOU COME HOME WITH US,

I'M SURE MOM AND DAD WOULD FIX A MEAL FOR YOU.

PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE YOU MET ME IN THE CAVE.

TO SAVE THAT SOUL, SOMEONE ELSE MUST LEAVE THEIR LIFE BEHIND AND START A JOURNEY TO HELP OTHERS.

IF ONE DIES WHILE COMMITTING A CRIME, THAT PERSON'S SOUL WILL BE SLAVE TO THE MOUNTAIN KING, DESTINED TO SUFFER FOREVER.

YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES, RIGHT?

THANK YOU,

BUT I'M ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT.

YES.

I'M ON A JOURNEY TO SAVE MY ADOPTIVE FATHER'S SOUL.

WELL, IN A WAY I AM ATONING FOR JIGURO...

OH, SO YOU KNOW A CRIMINAL?

NO, GINA, YOU SHOULDN'T ASK SUCH THINGS.

IF I ACCEPT SOMEONE'S GRATITUDE

AND HELP MYSELF TO A DELICIOUS MEAL, IT UNDOES MY GOOD DEED.

SO PLEASE KEEP THIS A SECRET.

OH, AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TORCH?

CAN YOU MAKE IT HOME BY YOURSELVES FROM HERE?

OKAY,

IF YOU SAY SO.

BUT THE FIRE WENT OUT.

I STILL HAVE IT,

THERE WAS A WHISTLING SOUND BACK THEN...

KWOOSH

fwoom

WILL THIS DO FOR YOUR JOURNEY HOME?

YES.

DO THE HYOHLU ALSO WIELD BLADES?

TO EXTINGUISH THE FIRE SO QUICKLY...

CUT BY A SHARP WEAPON.

OH, AND CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE THE NEAREST LASSAL IS?

WELL THEN, GOODBYE.

IT'S THE BIGGEST LASSAL IN MUSA, SO I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND AN INN THERE.

THE NEAREST IS SULA LASSAL.

IF YOU GO STRAIGHT THAT WAY THROUGH THE VALLEY BELOW, THERE'S ONE AROUND 30 LON FROM HERE.

~ lassal = market
~ 30 lon = 1 hour

THANK YOU.

.....

APOLOGIZING WON'T FIX THIS.

KASSA.

I'M SORRY.

I UNDERSTAND WHY GINA WANTED TO GO INSIDE THE CAVE.

ARE YOU TELLING ME YOU WOULDN'T DIE IF YOU WENT INTO THE CAVE?

SO, WHAT, SHISHEEM?

YEAH.

BUT OF COURSE I CAN'T TELL YOU THE SECRET TO FACING HIM.

EVERY MAN IN THE CLAN TELLS THEIR SON ABOUT THE RITUAL WHEN THEY TURN FIFTEEN,

SINCE WE'LL GO TO FACE THE HYOHLU AS THE KING'S SPEARS. JUST LIKE MY FATHER DID.

GINA!

THEN SHOW ME PROOF!

YOU'D DIE IF YOU WENT INTO THE CAVE WITHOUT KNOWING THAT SECRET.

A HAKUMA.

HERE.

SO FOR ME IT'S CHILD'S PLAY BY NOW.

I'VE BEEN GOING TO THE CAVE FOR MORE THAN A YEAR.

KASSA.

WE'RE DESCENDANTS OF CLAN LEADERS, AREN'T WE?

BUT THAT DOESN'T COUNT.

WARRIOR BLOOD ONLY PASSES FROM FATHER TO SON.

MOM IS.

IT'S NOT ABOUT GETTING A HAKUMA.

YOU GIVE UP TOO EASILY!

I'M SURE THERE ARE COMMONERS WHO'VE ALSO GOTTEN HAKUMAS.

THEY CAN ONLY BE CHOSEN FROM THE SONS OF CLAN LEADERS.

THE KING'S SPEARS ARE A GROUP OF NINE WARRIORS WHO PROTECT THE KING.

NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, I'LL NEVER BE AN ELITE WARRIOR. A "KING'S SPEAR".

.....

LIKE GOING TO THE CAVE TO GET A HAKUMA.

GINA, DON'T DO ANY-THING STUPID.

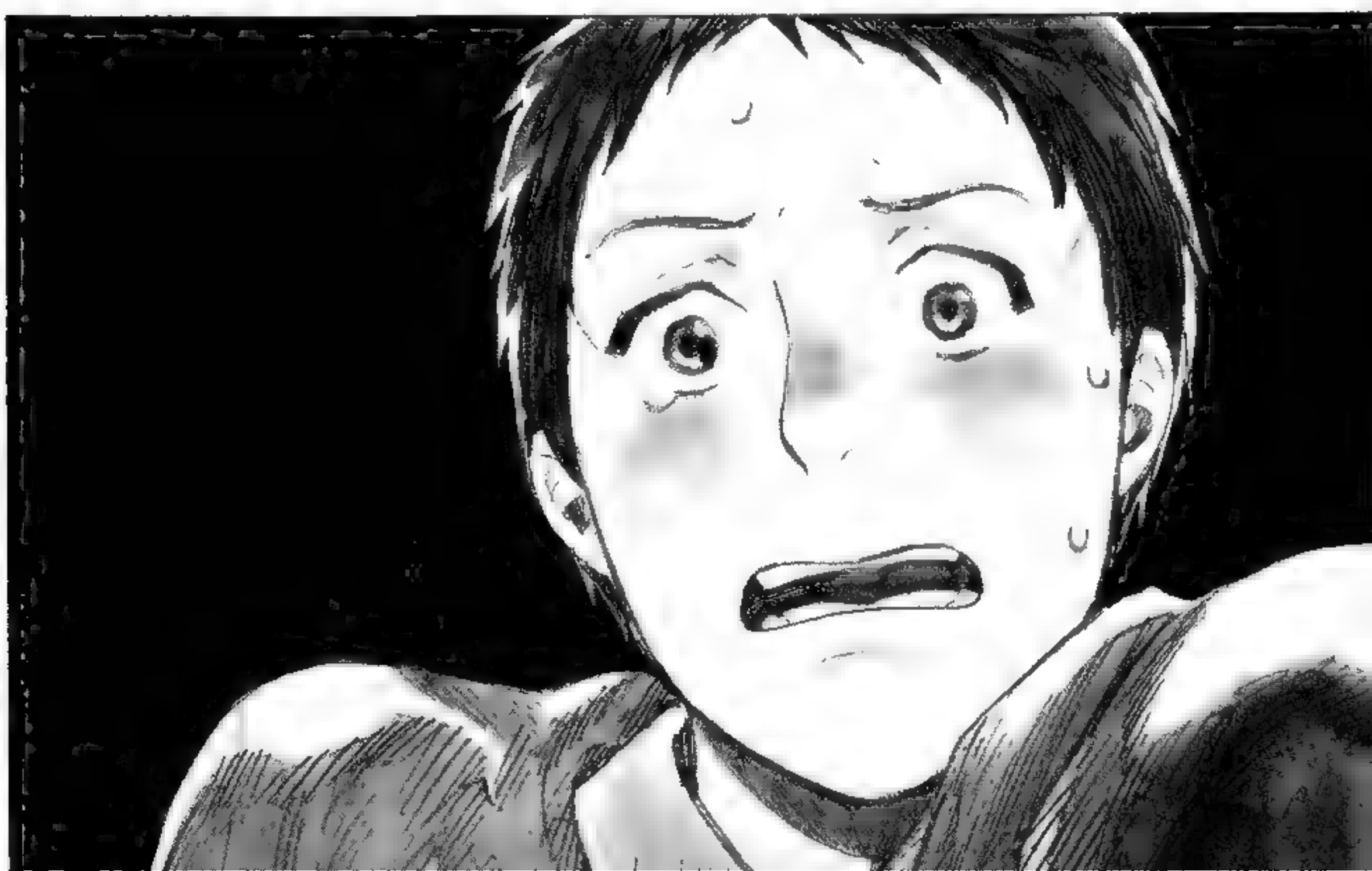
YOU'RE NOT THINKING OF DOING THAT, ARE YOU?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, STUPID?

AHHHHH!

GINA?

KYAAAAAAA!



I GUESS I DON'T HAVE WARRIOR'S BLOOD IN ME AFTER ALL.

WHEN I WAS FACING THE HYOHLU, I COULDN'T MOVE. MY WHOLE BODY FROZE.

I COULDN'T EVEN SCREAM.

KASSA.

THIS MEANS SHISHEEM WAS LYING, RIGHT?

HM?

HEY, KASSAAA!

AND YET SHE DEFEATED THAT HYOHLU, RIGHT?

SHE WASN'T A MAN OR EVEN A MEMBER OF THE CLAN,

SHE WAS A WOMAN.

.....

Stop

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU'RE A MAN OR A WOMAN OR WHO YOU'RE RELATED TO.

SO EITHER WAY, IF YOU'RE RISKING YOUR LIFE,

WELL, MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE SHE WASN'T AFRAID TO DIE BECAUSE SHE'S ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT.

OH, RIGHT.

HEY, YOU CAN'T TELL SHISHEEM ABOUT HER.

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING SHISHEEM TOMORROW.

WHEN THE HYOHLU WAS BREATHING DOWN ON ME, I FELT SOMETHING SMALL AND COLD FALL FROM ITS NECK.

I'M PRETTY SURE IT'S A HAKUMA.

I THINK I CAN DEAL WITH SHISHEEM EVEN WITHOUT TELLING HIM ABOUT HER.

HAHA

STOP MOVING AROUND. YOU'RE HEAVY ENOUGH AS IT IS.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

AHH!

THIS—

H-HEY.....

SEE?

SHING

IS A LUISHA...!

THIS

SULA
LASSAL

gasha = a kind of potato

WELCOME.

SO THEY'RE LIMITED TO GROWING THINGS LIKE GASHA.

THE SOIL ISN'T VERY FERTILE,

IT'S A PRETTY SMALL MARKET.

IS ALL THANKS TO THE LUISHA.

FOR PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO LIVE HERE DESPITE IT BEING A POOR COUNTRY

ONCE EVERY 20 YEARS, THE MYSTERIOUS SOUND OF A FLUTE CAN BE HEARD AT THE BASE OF THE YUSA MOUNTAIN RANGE.

IN THAT YEAR, THE MOUNTAIN KING, WHO REIGNS BELOW GROUND, SENDS A LUISHA STONE TO THE KING OF KANBAL WHO REIGNS ABOVE GROUND

AS A TOKEN OF THEIR AMICABLE RELATION-SHIP.

IN THAT "GIVING CEREMONY", THE KING OF KANBAL JOURNEYS TO THE DEPTHS OF THE CAVE

WITH HIS NINE STRONGEST SPEARMEN, THE "KING'S SPEARS", TO PROTECT HIM.

SINCE THIS CEREMONY IS HELD IN SECRET,

THE GENERAL POPULACE DOES NOT KNOW HOW THE EXCHANGE TAKES PLACE.

ACCORDING TO LEGEND, A BRAVE YOUNG MAN VENTURED INTO THE CAVE BY HIMSELF A THOUSAND YEARS AGO

AND FELL IN LOVE WITH THE MOUN-TAIN KING'S DAUGHTER.

THE MOUNTAIN KING TOLD THE YOUNG MAN THAT IF HE WANTED TO MARRY HIS DAUGHTER,

HE WOULD HAVE TO WIELD HIS SPEAR AND FIGHT THE KING'S SON FIRST.

THE YOUNG MAN ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE AND FOUGHT THE HYOHLU, THE "GUARDIAN OF DARKNESS".

IT WAS A SPLENDID BATTLE.

THE MOUNTAIN KING LAUDED THAT YOUNG MAN, AND ALLOWED HIS DAUGHTER TO GO WITH HIM BENEATH THE SUN.

THE MOUNTAIN KING PROMISED TO GIVE A GIFT TO HIS DAUGHTER'S DESCENDANTS EVERY FEW DECADES.

THAT GIFT IS THE LUISHA— THE STONE OF BLUE LIGHT.

TO NURTURE THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE KINGDOMS ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND,

THE YOUNG MAN, WHO WAS HAILED AS A HERO, GATHERED THE NINE CLANS AND BECAME THE FIRST KING OF KANBAL.

AND AS KING, HE VOWED TO PROVIDE FOR THE PEOPLE OF KANBAL WITH THE LUISHA.

AND SO A SYSTEM WAS FORMED WHEREIN THE KING BOUGHT GRAIN WITH THE LUISHA

AND DISTRIBUTED IT TO THE GENERAL POPULACE.

AS A TOKEN OF HIS GRATITUDE FOR THE LUISHA,

THE KING PROMISED TO SEND RAGA AND DRIED GOAT MEAT TO THE COUNTRY BELOW GROUND WHERE IT DOESN'T EXIST.

raga — cheese in Kanbal made from goat's milk

ARE YOU PLANNING ON BUYING THAT?

I'M FINE WITH MENSWEAR.

I'M ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT.

THOSE ARE FOR MEN, YOU KNOW?

I WAS BORN IN KANBAL, BUT I WAS RAISED BY MY FATHER IN YOGO.

I'M FROM THE NEW YOGO EMPIRE.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

THAT MUST BE TOUGH.

OH,

I SEE.

AH NO, I'M SORRY.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO PRY.

...PLEASE DO NOT ASK ME FOR MORE DETAILS.

SO I DECIDED TO GO ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT IN MY HOMELAND.

MY FATHER COMMITTED A CRIME IN YOGO AND DIED,

DAMN.

WELL, THAT, AND YOU'RE WEARING FOREIGN CLOTHES.

IT'S JUST THAT THE PATTERN ON YOUR SPEAR LOOKS LIKE THE ONE ON OUR CLAN LEADER'S.

SO I WAS JUST CURIOUS.

BUT I DON'T THINK HE WAS FROM MUSA...

THIS IS A MEMENTO FROM MY FATHER.

OH, REALLY?

I DIDN'T EXPECT THAT MY SPEAR WOULD GIVE ME AWAY.

SINCE YOU'RE ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT.

I'LL THROW IN THAT SASH AS A BONUS,

IT'S SO NAL FOR THOSE CLOTHES AND BOOTS.

I GUESS SOME OTHER CLAN HAS A SIMILAR SPEAR, THEN.

I SEE.

IT'LL BE ONE YOGO SILVER FOR THE LOT.

YES.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ADDING ON THIS CARRU MADE FROM KANBAL GOATSKIN?

CAN I PAY WITH YOGO MONEY HERE?

carru = cloak

THIS CARRU IS MADE FROM THE HAIR OF KANBAL GOATS, WHICH IS KNOWN FOR ITS HIGH OIL CONTENT.

IT REPELS WATER AND WARDS OFF FLIES.

MAYBE YOU'VE SPENT TOO LONG IN YOGO TO REMEMBER,

BUT WINTERS IN KANBAL COME QUICKLY.

HOW DO I GET TO THE YONSA CLAN'S TERRITORY?

SURE.

CAN I ALSO ASK YOU FOR DIRECTIONS?

OKAY, I'LL TAKE IT.

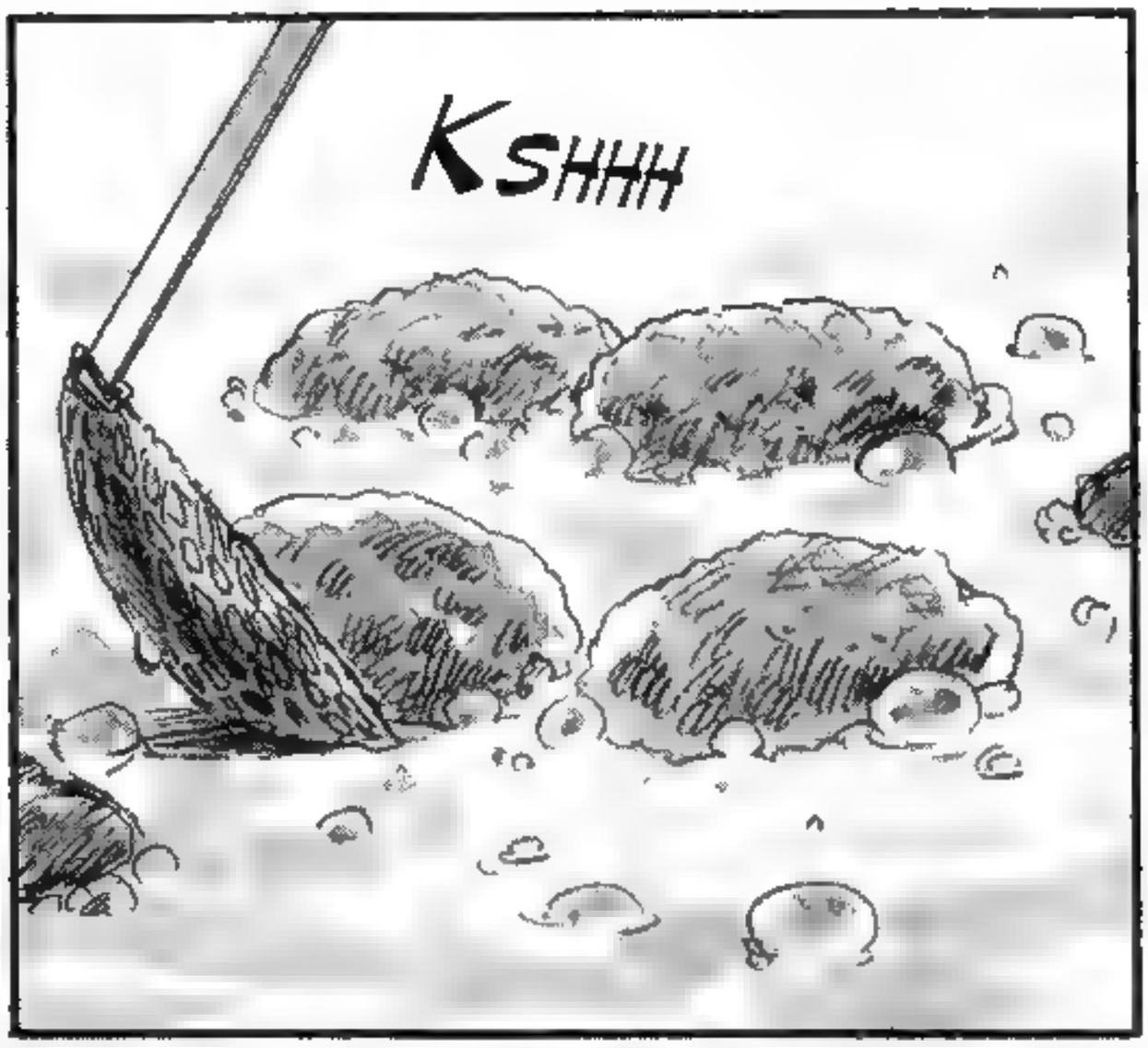
THIS IS A MAP DESIGNED FOR FOREIGN MERCHANTS.

I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU FOR HALF A NAL.

YONSA IS ACROSS THAT MOUNTAIN FOLD.

THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO HAVE.

IT'S NOT VERY DETAILED, BUT IT'S A GOOD MAP.



rosso = a mix of various foods deep fried and covered in potato powder

Sip

MUNCH

MUNCH

CRUNCH

CRUNCH

MUNCH

MUNCH

I'LL SKIP MUSA FOR TODAY

AND HEAD TO THE YONSA CLAN TERRITORY.

SHE BECAME A DOCTOR, WHICH WAS RARE FOR A WOMAN.

SHE'S MY FATHER'S SISTER, AND THEY SAID SHE WAS EVEN SMARTER THAN HIM.

YUUKA YONSA IS THE ONLY RELATIVE I HAD IN THE YONSA CLAN.

ALL I REMEMBER OF HER WAS A TALL YOUNG WOMAN BRINGING ME MEALS AND SWEETS WHEN I WAS LITTLE.

SHE'S A BIT OF A STRANGE WOMAN.

YUUKA, HUH...

THAT'S AUNT YUUKA'S CLINIC.

I FEEL LIKE I HAVE SOME MEMORIES OF THIS PLACE.

I THINK MY FATHER ONCE TOOK ME HERE WHEN I WAS YOUNG.

A YUCCA TREE.

OH.

CREAK

I'D LIKE TO SEE YUUKA...

YES.

ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL?

IS THIS LADY YUUKA'S CLINIC?

NO, I'M NOT A PATIENT.

I'M YUUKA YONSA.

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU NEED?

.....UH.

?!

KARUNA'S DAUGHTER!

AUNT YUUKA!

IT'S BALSA!

I'M NOT USING ANYONE'S NAME.

I REALLY AM BALSA.

WHY ARE YOU USING MY NIECE'S NAME?

YOU...

YOU CAN'T BE BALSA.

BUT

.....

AUNT,

DID YOU EVER SEE THE BODY?

...BALSA DIED WHEN SHE WAS SIX.

DIED...

AUNT...

.....

...NO, SHE FELL INTO THE DRAINAGE WELL...

AND WAS WASHED AWAY BY THE WASTE-WATER...

BUT I HAVE MEMORIES OF FALLING FROM THIS TREE

AND BREAKING MY ARM...

I REMEMBER THIS YUCCA TREE.

I CAN'T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHEN,

.....

...BALSA?

...IS IT REALLY YOU?

...OH, GOD...

IS THIS A NIGHTMARE?

Yami no Moribito

"Guardian of the Darkness"

By Uehashi Nahoko

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Scanlation:
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Chapter Three

Raws: Kalendel
Translation: Den
Editing: Samara &
Nutritious Milk
QC: Ianu

YAMI NO MORIBITO
CHAPTER 3

THIS IS TERRIBLE.

KASSA..... WHAT DO WE DO?

MORN-
ING.
?

chirp
chirp
MOM,
DAD, GOOD
MORNING.
PEEK
PEEK

GINA.....
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOUR
FOOT?

UH,
UMM...

HOW COULD YOU DO SOMETHING SO STUPID...?!

HEY, LEENA, GIVE THEM A MINUTE.

YOU BOTH COULD HAVE DIED!!

GOING INSIDE THE CAVES ON A DARE?!

YES.

SO I THREW THE TORCH AT IT.

THEN

IT RAN AWAY...

SO THE HYOHLU, A GUARDIAN OF DARKNESS, LEANED OVER GINA?

KASSA,

GO ON.

KASSA, ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO LIE TO ME?

.....

STARE

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WH-

.....

UM...

ACTUALLY, WE WERE SAVED BY SOMEONE WHO WAS ON A JOURNEY OF ATONE-MENT.

UM, LOOK AT THIS...

IS THIS GOING TO MAKE US RICH?

UM... DAD,

THIS IS DEFINITELY A LUISHA.

OH MY.....

BUT...

THIS STONE IS A TREASURE THAT NORMAL FOLKS LIKE US SHOULDN'T HAVE.

DIDN'T YOU LEARN THAT IN SCHOOL?

GINA, THE LUISHA IS THE "TREASURE OF THE KING OF KANBAL".

.....

AND WE COULD EAT THREE MEALS A DAY EVERY DAY, JUST LIKE IN SUMMERTIME.

IF WE SELL THIS, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO GO FAR AWAY FOR WORK AGAIN,

BUT I RISKED MY LIFE TO BRING IT BACK.

THAT'S A HORRIBLE, SHORT-SIGHTED IDEA.

GINA.....

IF WE SUDDENLY GOT RICH, HOW WOULD WE EXPLAIN IT TO EVERYONE IN THE CLAN?

THINK ABOUT IT.

EVEN IF YOU CAME UP WITH A GOOD LIE, WOULD YOU BE HAPPY DECEIVING EVERYONE

AND BEING THE ONLY FAMILY IN THE CLAN WITH SUCH GOOD FOR-TUNE?

IN ANY CASE, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE KEEP THIS TO OURSELVES.

AND THIS PERSON ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT WENT TO SULA LASSAL?

...I SEE.

KAGURO?

KAGURO...

THE CHIEF OF MUSA CLAN. MY MOTHER'S OLDER BROTHER, WHO'S JUST AS SMART AS HER.

KASSA,

I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT THE FRONT GATE AFTER YOUR LESSONS.

WE'LL GO TO KAGURO'S AND EXPLAIN THIS TO HIM.

THAT TRAVELER SAVED OUR LIVES.

AND I PROMISED HER I WOULD KEEP IT A SECRET.....

BUT, DAD.....

LONG AGO, HE FOUGHT A WOLF AND LOST HIS RIGHT EYE AND ARM.

IT WAS ABSOLUTELY TERRIFYING.

THAT SHE IS ACTUALLY ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT.

I DON'T BELIEVE

SHE FOUGHT THE HYOHLU AND WON,

THEN LED YOU OUTSIDE THE CAVE IN DARKNESS WITHOUT GETTING LOST?

.....

THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO COULD DO THAT ARE THE KING'S SPEARS, LIKE YOUR UNCLE YUGURO.

THINK ABOUT IT.

SOMEONE LIKE HER KNOWING THAT MUCH ABOUT THE CAVES COULD SPELL HUGE TROUBLE FOR US.

THERE IS NO WAY A WOMAN CAN BE A KING'S SPEAR.

BUT SHE SAVED OUR LIVES!

SHE'S NOT GOING TO BETRAY US!

I CAN'T KEEP QUIET ABOUT THE FACT THAT SHE COULD BRING HARM TO THE CLAN.

AT ANY RATE...

SETTLE DOWN.

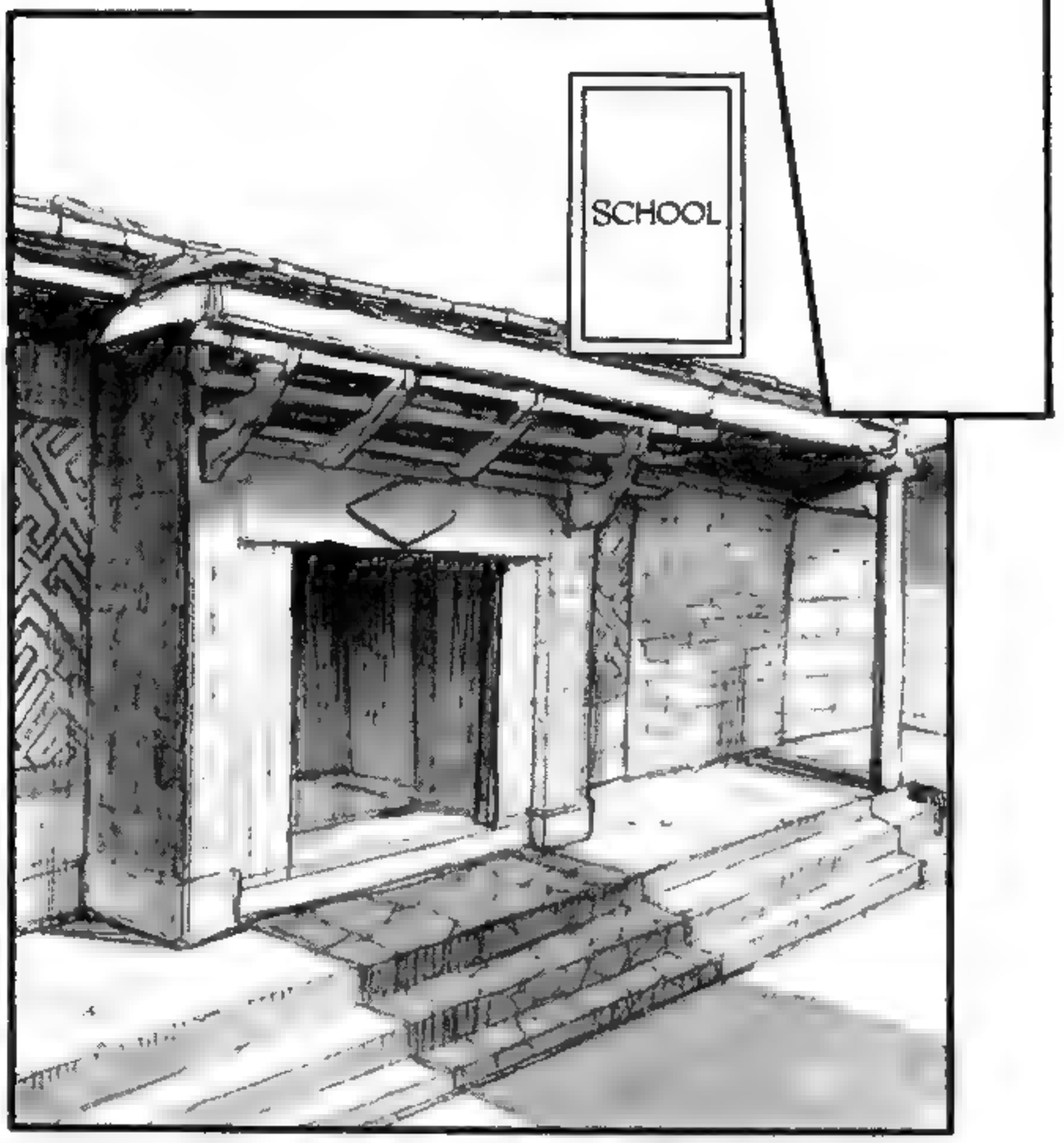
EVEN IF SHE IS PLOTTING SOMETHING AGAINST OUR CLAN,

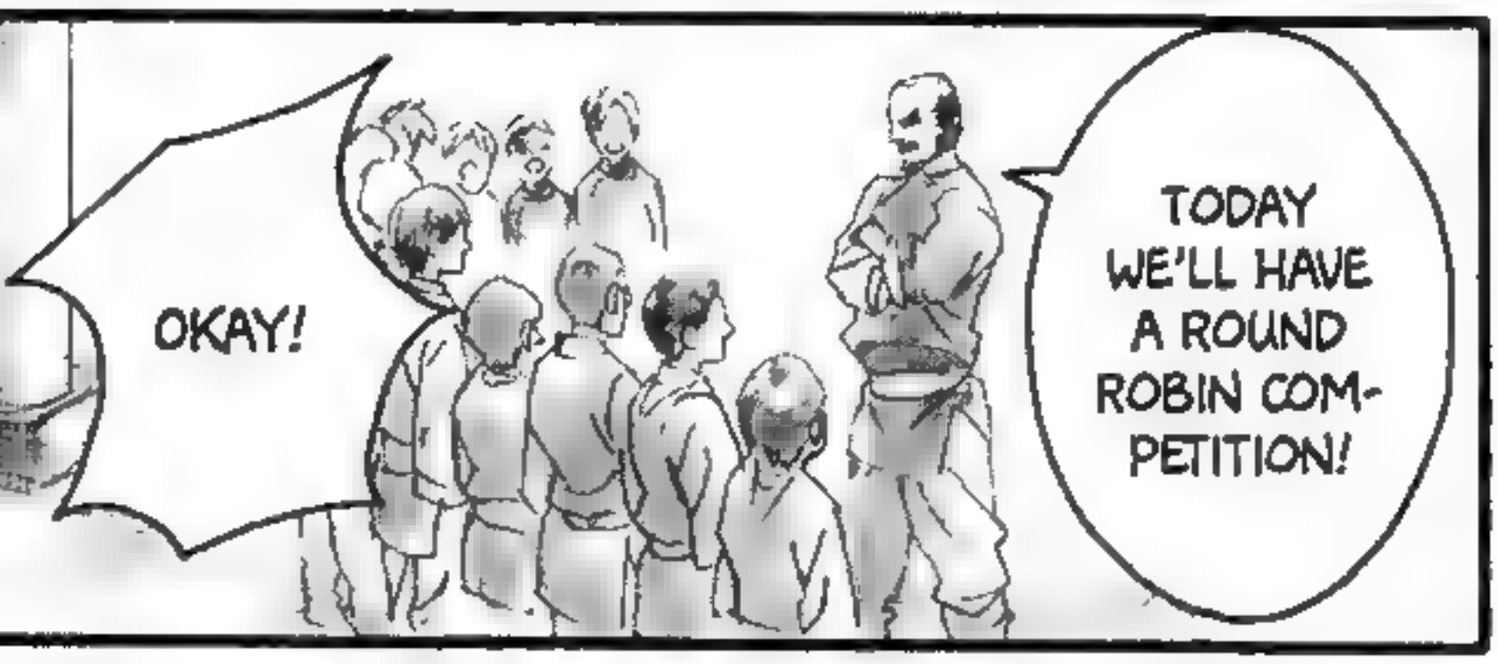
I'LL STILL STAND BY HER UNTIL THE VERY END.

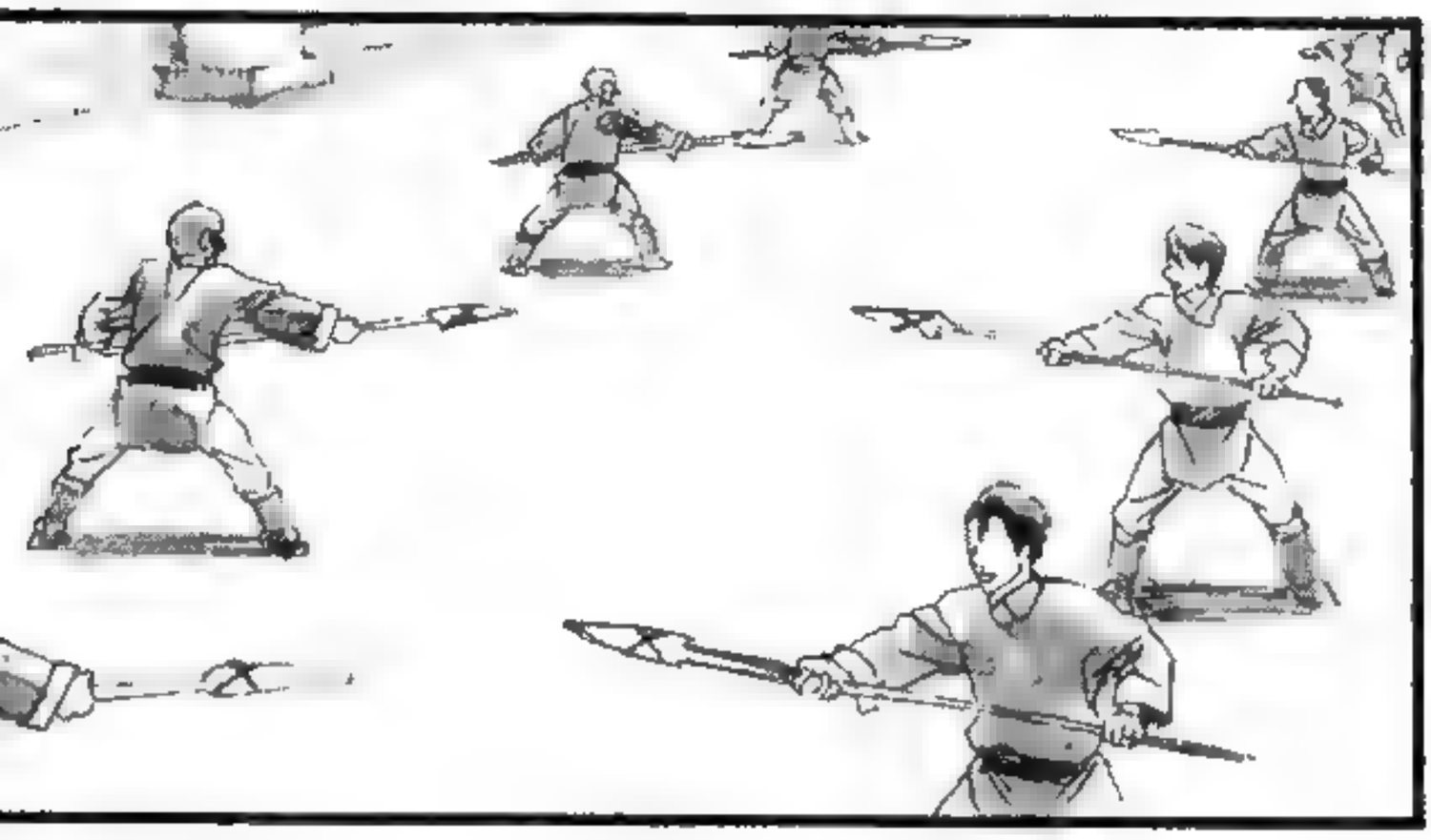
OKAY?

BUT STILL, I'M GRATE-FUL TO HER.

MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING IS START-ING!
HURRY UP, KASSA


SCHOOL


OKAY!
TODAY WE'LL HAVE A ROUND ROBIN COM-PETITION!



HE'S THE SON OF YUGURO, ONE OF THE KING'S SPEARS. HE'S VERY TALENTED,

SO HE ALWAYS RUBS HIS RANK IN OUR FACE, HOW HE'S FROM THE CHIEFTAIN'S LINE AND WE'RE ONLY FROM A BRANCH LINE.

I DON'T LIKE FIGHTING WITH SHISHEEM, EITHER.

I HATE BEING PART-NERED WITH SHISHEEM.

HE LIKES EMBARRASS-ING HIS OPPONENTS.

whisper

FIGHT!

YAH!

BUT SOMEHOW, TODAY...

step

step

NEXT!

WHOOSH

NEXT!

SLASH

SHISHEEM...

WHOOSH...

START!

step

CLANK

HA!

YAH!

CLANK

YES!

SWING

FWOOSH

GLANCE

SWING

WHOOSH

clang

WHAP

!!

Press

slam

HAA

HAA

HAA

ENOUGH!

AMAZING !!

YOU PUT UP A FIGHT AGAINST SHISHEEM!

.....

YOU'VE REALLY GOTTEN STRONGER,

KASSA.

CLENCH

tap

YOU'D BE A GOOD SPEAR-WIELDER.

YOU'LL BE WASTING YOUR TALENTS FIGHTING GOATS ALL YOUR LIFE.

YOU COULD'VE BEEN A KING'S SPEAR IF YOU HAD BEEN BORN FROM THE CHIEF'S BLOODLINE.

TOO BAD.

step

step

ALL MY LIFE?

FIGHTING GOATS.....

I WISH WE COULD SELL THE LUISHA.....

GROOOWL

SORRY I'M LATE.

KASSA.

DAD.

THEN SOME ROSSO WITH LAGA, STUFFED WITH SOFT AND SWEET YUKKA FRUIT.

WITH SPICY GANLA SAUCE.

I'D BE EATING WELL-COOKED SANGA BEEF

6WOOO

6WOOO

6WOOO

6WOOO

YUGURO!

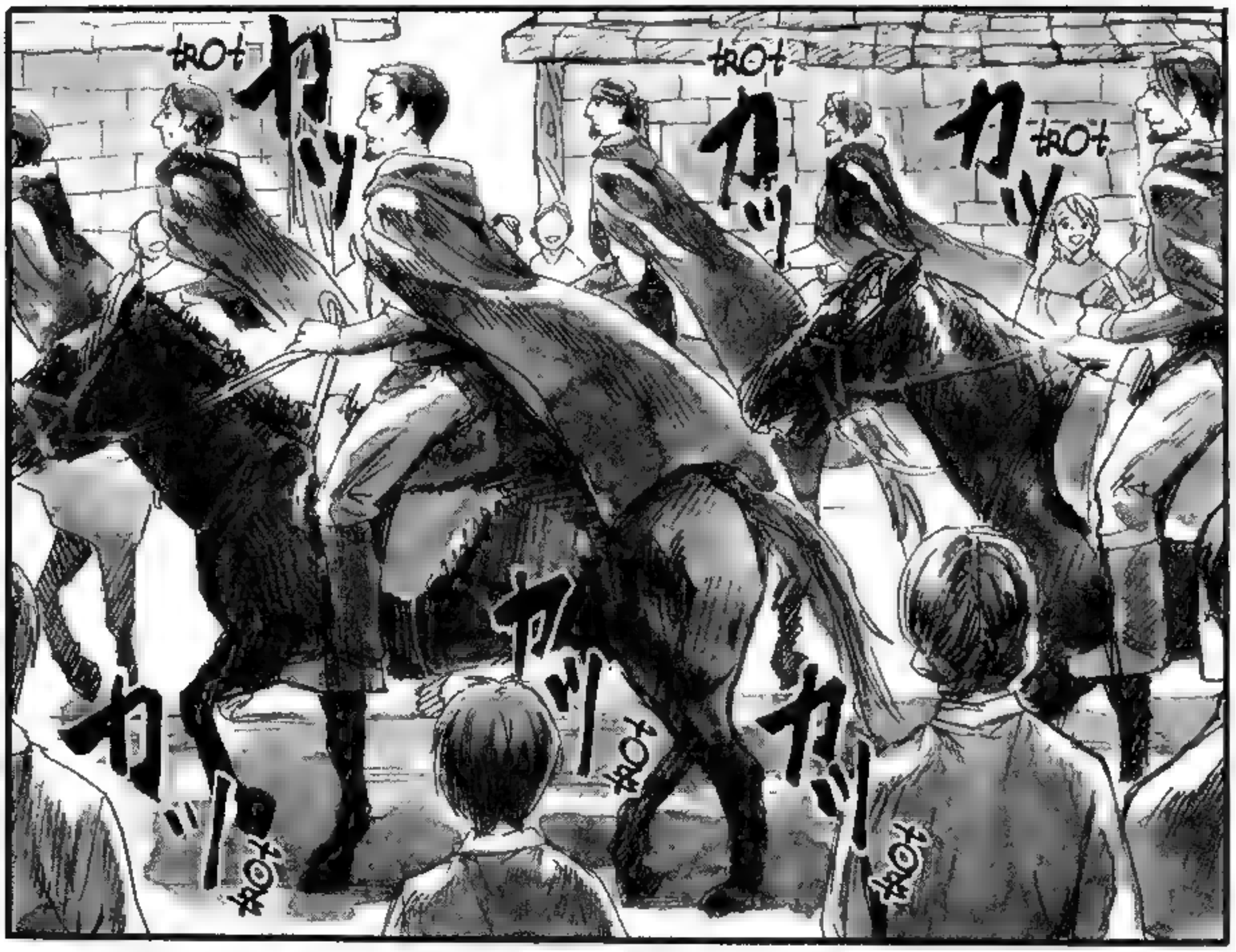
chatter

chatter

IT'S YUGURO!

AH, THE SOUND OF THE HUNTING HORN.

THAT MEANS YUGURO IS BACK FROM THE PALACE!


trot
カッ
trot
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trot
trot
trot

Shudder
Yiiieee

YUGURO!!
YUGURO!

CLOP

YUGURO, WELCOME BACK!!

THAT SPEAR'S PATTERN...

.....

Shine

!!

KAHM!

KAGURO CAN BE STUBBORN AND INFLEXI-BILE.

I FEEL BETTER KNOWING THAT YUGURO WILL BE THERE TO LISTEN TOO.

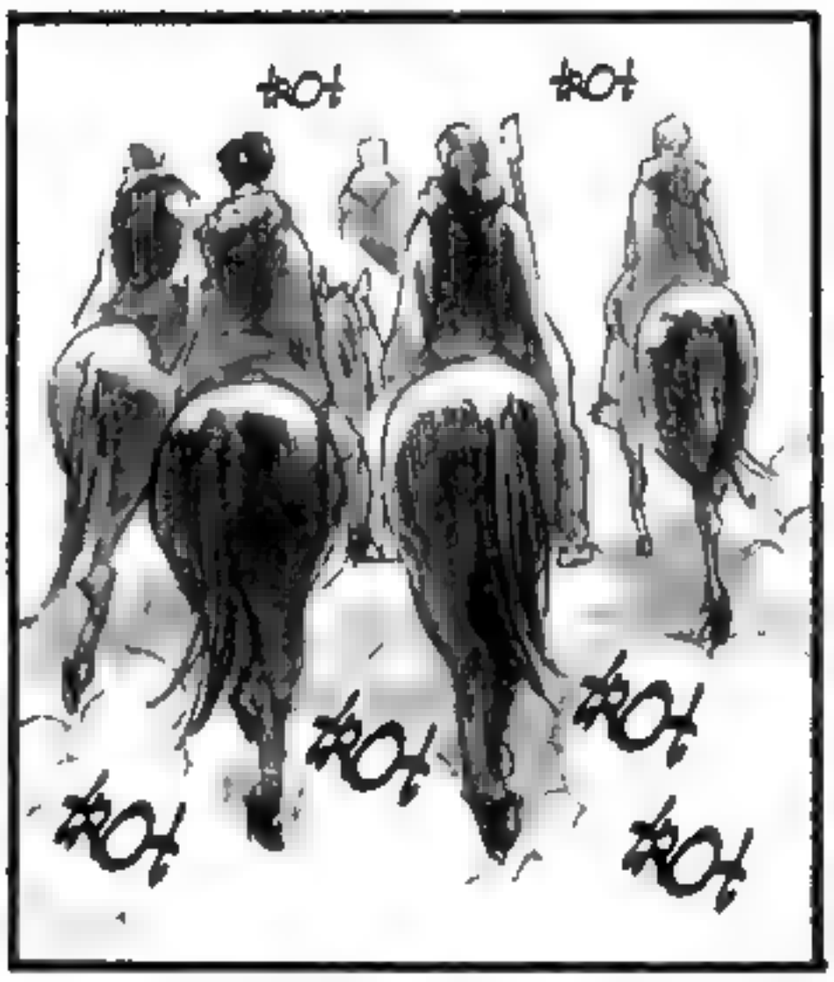
THIS IS A BLESSING FOR US.

THANK GOOD-NESS!

I LIKE MY COUSIN KAHM.

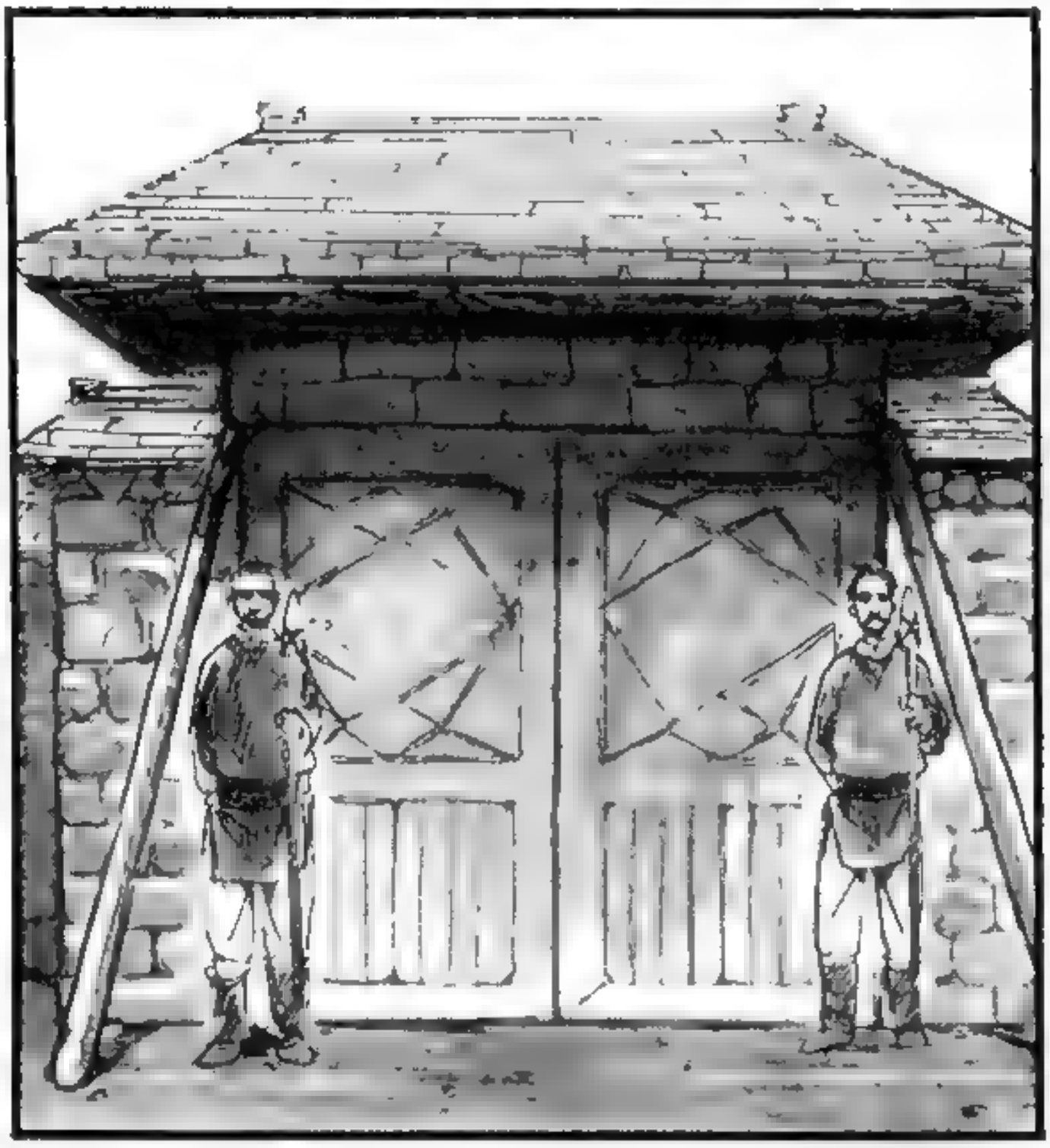
HE'S A KIND MAN, UNLIKE HIS FATHER KAGURO.

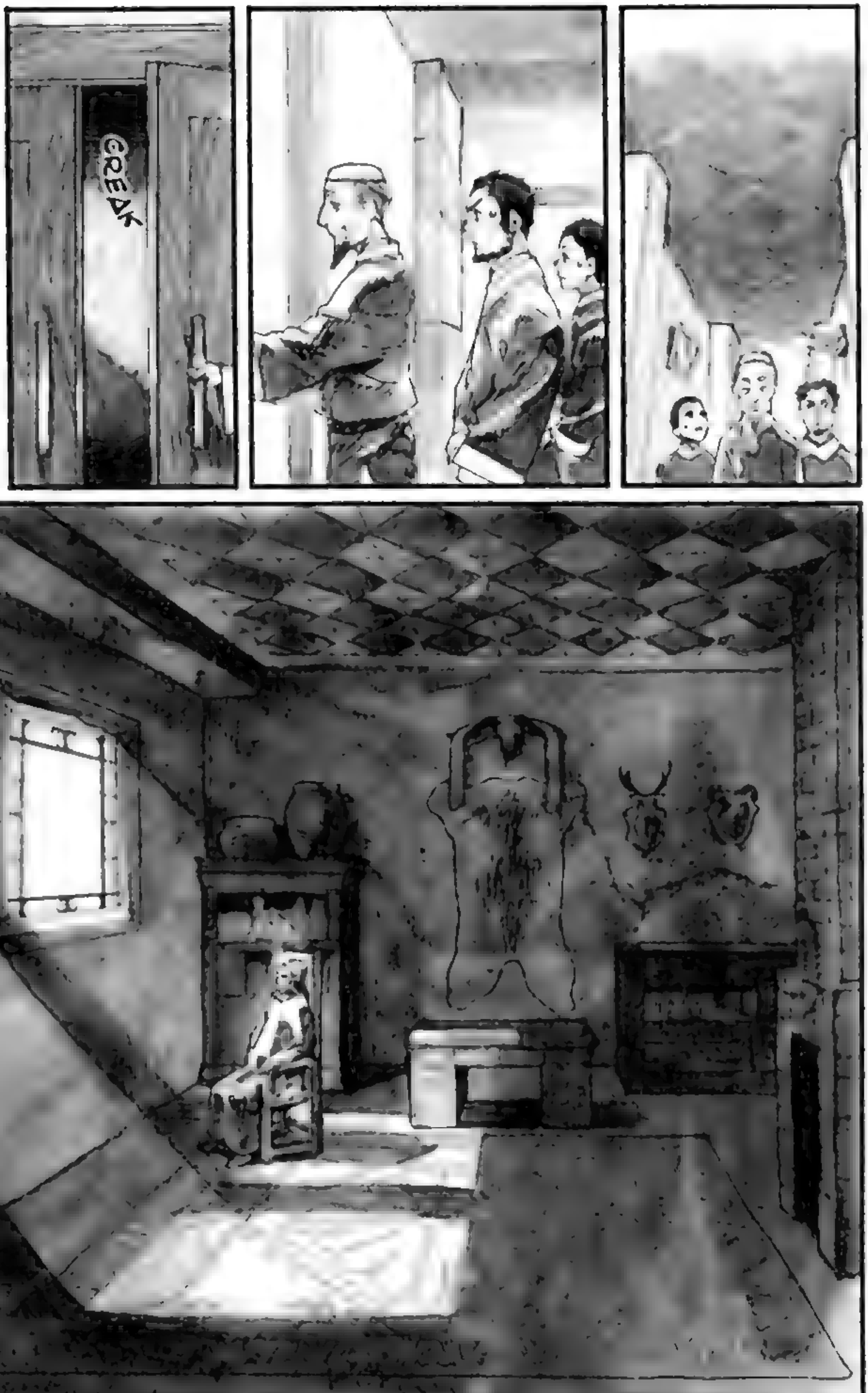
Smile


HOF
HOF
HOF
HOF
HOF
HOF

HA!

LET'S GO.




CREAK

GOOD TO SEE YOU,

TONNO,

KASSA.

KAGURO.

OH,

TONNO.

I'M SORRY, WERE YOU IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME-THING?

Shudder

KNOCK KNOCK

.....

WELL, LAST NIGHT, KASSA AND MY DAUGHTER GINA...

ON THE CONTRARY,

YOU'RE PROBABLY BUSY,

BUT IF YOU COULD SPARE A MOMENT, IT'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE BOTH OF YOU TO HEAR.

WHAT IS IT?

BUT I'M SORRY, I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE YOUR STORY.

TONNO...

I HEAR YOU,

rustle

BUT WHEN THE HYOHLU LEANED OVER MY DAUGHTER

IT DROPPED SOMETHING, AND MY DAUGHTER TOOK IT HOME WITH HER.....

I JUST THINK THAT KASSA MADE UP A GOOD STORY.

YES, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT AT THE BEGINNING, TOO.

THIS IS

A LUISHA! A "LUMINOUS BLUE GEM"!!

flicker

IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE,

THEN SOME THINGS JUST DON'T ADD UP.

.....

HMM.

BUT YOU ARE MY SISTER'S FAMILY,

SO I'LL TELL YOU WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT YOU WILL NOT DIVULGE THIS TO ANYONE ELSE.

WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL YOU IS ONLY KNOWN TO THOSE FROM THE CHIEF'S BLOODLINE.

GET CAUGHT IN THE CURRENT, AND DROWN.

BUT MOST OF THEM ACTUALLY JUST GET LOST IN THE LABYRINTH,

MANY STORIES TELL OF KIDS BEING EATEN BY HYOHLU,

FIRST, IT'S STRANGE THAT A HYOHLU WOULD APPEAR SO CLOSE TO THE SURFACE WORLD.

HYOLHU ARE SERVANTS OF THE MOUNTAIN KING.

THEY WOULDN'T HARM ANYONE UNLESS SOMEONE BREACHES THEIR TERRITORY

AND COMMITS A CRIME.

THEN THIS MAY BE THE YEAR THAT THE "GATE TO THE DEEP MOUNTAINS" WILL OPEN,

AND THE CEREMONY OF THE GIVING OF THE LUISHA WILL OCCUR.

IF A HYOLHU WAS NEAR THE SURFACE,

...BUT THE STRANGEST THING BY FAR IS THAT WOMAN ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT IT WAS A HYOHLU YOU ENCOUNTERED,

IF A LUISHA FELL FROM ITS BODY.

AND THAT SHE FOUGHT THE HYOHLU WITH THAT SPEAR AND WON?

Y-YES.

YOU SAID SHE CARRIED A SPEAR?

GINA AND I COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING IN THE DARKNESS.

WELL...

MY TORCH HAD GONE OUT BY THEN.

AS IT DIS-APPEARED TO THE DEPTHS OF THE CAVE

WAS THE BLUE LIGHT FROM THE HYOLHU

THE ONLY THING I GOT A GLIMPSE OF

BUT I COULD HEAR THEIR FOOTSTEPS, THEIR BREATH-ING, AND THE SPEAR SLICING THROUGH THE AIR.....

AND THEN THE WOMAN TOLD US EVERYTHING WAS ALRIGHT...

YES.

IN TOTAL DARK-NESS...?

SO SHE LED YOU OUT OF THE CAVE

THAT'S RIGHT.

AND THE WHOLE TIME, SHE NEVER TOLD YOU TO LIGHT THE TORCH?

AND YOU SAID SHE WORE FOREIGN-LOOKING CLOTHES AND SPOKE KANBALESE LIKE A FOR-EIGNER?

WHAT'S WRONG, YUGURO?

.....

I'M PROBABLY JUST TIRED FROM THE JOURNEY.

NOTHING...

LET ME JUST SIT FOR A WHILE.

IT LOOKS EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE PATTERN IN YUGURO'S SPEAR.

BEFORE MY TORCH WAS LIT, THE LAST THING I SAW WAS THE PATTERN ON HER SPEAR.

AND NOW THAT I'VE SEEN YUGURO'S SPEAR, I JUST REMEMBERED.

UM.....

HIS SPEAR?!

COULD IT BE...

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Chapter Four

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YAMI NO MORIBITO
CHAPTER 4

SHEESH,

YOU'RE ALWAYS GETTING HURT.

IT SEEMS LIKE MY FATE IS ALWAYS TIED TO HEALERS...

TANDA...

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?

Tanda = Balsa's childhood friend and healer

WON'T I JUST HURT MORE PEOPLE BY DIGGING UP THE PAST? EVERYONE'S ALREADY MOVED ON.

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE...

.....

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.

AND NEVER COME BACK HERE AGAIN...

I'LL TALK TO MY AUNT.

IF SHE TELLS ME NOT TO DREDGE UP THE PAST,

THEN I'LL LEAVE KANBAL WITHOUT MEETING JIGURO'S PARENTS

LET'S HAVE SOME LAKALLE WHILE YOU TELL ME YOUR STORY.

SO,

THANKFULLY I HAD FEWER PATIENTS TODAY THAN USUAL.

lakalle = a drink made from fermented goat milk

PUFF

PUFF

MY FATHER USED TO MAKE ME DRINK THIS WHEN I HAD A COLD.....

THIS LAKALLE...

MAKES ME FEEL NOSTALGIC.

WE INFUSE THE LAKALLE WITH SPICES. KARUNA AND I DEVELOPED IT WHEN WE WERE STUDYING MEDICINE AT THE CAPITAL.

IT'S GOOD FOR COLDS.

YES...

I GUESS YOU ARE BALSA AFTER ALL.

.....SO SOMEONE SAVED YOU AFTER YOU FELL INTO THAT WELL

.....

AND WERE SWEPT AWAY BY THE CURRENT?

BUT BEFORE I SAY ANYTHING ELSE...

.....

I NEVER FELL INTO A WELL.

WILL YOU TELL ME HOW MY FATHER DIED?

KARUNA WAS KILLED

.....

TEN DAYS AFTER YOU... DISAPPEARED.

THE GUARDS FROM THE CAPITAL SAID IT WAS THE WORK OF THIEVES.

THE HOUSE WAS A MESS, AS IF A STORM HAD PASSED THROUGH IT.

HIS ASSISTANT SHOWED UP TO WORK AS USUAL ONE DAY

AND FOUND HIS BODY BY THE BACK DOOR.

YES.

...DID YOU SEE HIS BODY?

EVEN NOW I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER WHAT REALLY HAPPENED.

ONE WAS A LONG WOUND FROM HIS LEFT SHOULDER DOWN TO HIS STOMACH.

KARUNA WAS INJURED IN TWO PLACES.

THAT CUT WAS MEANT TO STOP HIS BREATHING.

I KNEW THAT WHOEVER DID IT WASN'T A ROBBER. THEY WANTED TO KILL HIM.

THE SECOND WAS A DEEP CUT TO HIS THROAT..... AS SOON AS I SAW THAT,

...RIGHT.

HE TOLD ME THAT IF YOU SAW THE BODY, YOU'D KNOW RIGHT AWAY THAT THERE WAS FOUL PLAY.

JIGURO WAS WORRIED.

HE HOPED THAT IT WOULDN'T PUT YOU IN DANGER.

.....JIGURO SAVED ME AND RAISED ME.

YES.

JIGURO MUSA?

JIGURO?

clench

I REALLY DO FEEL LIKE I'M IN A NIGHTMARE.

JIGURO WAS A FOOLISH MAN.

HIS SELFISHNESS CAUSED A GREAT DEAL OF SUFFER-ING FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE, THAT IDIOT.

BUT TO ACTUALLY DO WHAT HE DID...

HE HAD A STUBBORN STREAK EVEN WHEN WE WERE YOUNG.

...WHAT DID HE DO?

FIRST I NEED TO TELL YOU WHAT THE SITUATION WAS LIKE AT THE TIME.

HE WAS CUNNING EVEN DURING HIS PRACTICE BOUTS WITH THE PRINCES. YOU COULD SEE IT WHEN HE TRAINED WITH ROGSAM.

JIGURO WAS THE YOUNGEST AND MOST TALENTED OF THE KING'S SPEARS.

WHEN YOU SAW THEM FIGHT, YOU COULD FEEL THEIR MUTUAL HATRED.

ハッ

I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SUCCESSION OF KINGS IN KANBAL,
BUT THE HEIR DOESN'T AUTOMATICALLY ASCEND THE THRONE WHEN IT'S TIME FOR A NEW KING.

A CEREMONY TAKES PLACE TO RECOGNIZE THE NEW KING. THE KING'S SPEARS GATHER AROUND HIM
AND TOUCH HIS HEAD WITH THE GOLD RINGS OF THEIR SPEARS.
THE NINE MEMBERS OF THE KING'S SPEARS MUST FIRST PLEDGE THEIR LOYALTY AND RECOGNIZE HIM AS THE TRUE KING.
WHEN THE KING OF KANBAL DIES AND THE HEIR TAKES HIS PLACE,

WHEN JIGURO WAS 16, HE WAS INVITED TO THE GIVING CEREMONY AS THE KING'S ATTENDANT.

I... DIDN'T KNOW THAT.

BACK THEN, HE WAS CONSIDERED A HERO, THE BEST AMONG THE KING'S SPEARS.

BUT A MAN WHO WOULD LEAD SO MANY INTO DESPAIR OVER HIS OWN PRIDE AND STUBBORNNESS

IS SIMPLY A FOOL.

THOSE GOLDEN RINGS ARE PRECIOUS TREASURES THAT SYMBOLIZE THE BOND BETWEEN THE NINE CLANS AND THE ROYAL FAMILY.

HE STOLE THE GOLDEN SPEAR RINGS STORED DEEP IN THE CASTLE AND FLED THE COUNTRY.

WHEN HE FOUND OUT THAT KING NAGUL WAS GRAVELY ILL,

I'M SURE JIGURO COULDN'T ACCEPT THAT...

IF KING NAGUL SUCCUMBED TO HIS ILLNESS, ROGSAM WOULD INHERIT THE THRONE.

TO THOSE WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE WARRIOR CLASS.

THESE DAYS THIS STORY IS ONLY TOLD

WAS DESPICABLE.

.....BUT STEALING THE GOLDEN RINGS AND RUNNING AWAY

BEFORE THEY LEFT, THEY PLEDGED A VOW OF DEAFNESS AND SILENCE TO YORAM, THE GOD OF THUNDER.

IT WAS A VOW TO TAKE JIGURO'S LIFE WITHOUT EXCHANGING EVEN ONE WORD WITH HIM.

BUT ALMOST ALL OF THEM WERE KILLED.

THE CLAN LEADERS SWORE THEIR FEALTY TO THE KING,

AND TO WIN BACK HIS TRUST,

EACH CLAN SENT THEIR STRONGEST MEMBER TO PURSUE JIGURO.

.....

HE WAS A KIND AND CHEERFUL YOUNG MAN.....

BUT ONLY THE TIP OF HIS SPEAR RETURNED.

TAGURU FROM THE YONSA CLAN, WHO WAS THE CHIEF'S ELDEST SON AND A MEMBER OF THE KING'S SPEARS, WENT AFTER JIGURO AS WELL.

JIGURO ASKED A KANBALESE MAN WHO WAS WORKING OUT OF TOWN.....

THEY DID IT FOR HONOR, TO PLEDGE THEIR LOY-ALTY TO THE KING...

SO THOSE MEN DIDN'T GO AFTER JIGURO TO PROTECT THEIR FAMILIES FROM POSSIBLE DANGER...

rustle

.....SO THAT MAN REALLY BROUGHT BACK THE SPEARHEAD, JUST AS HE SAID.

AUNT YUKA,

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT JIGURO WOULD DO SOMETHING THAT STUPID?

THEY DRAGGED JIGURO'S NAME THROUGH THE MUD.....

THERE WAS NO OTHER REASON.

I KNOW HOW MUCH HE DESPISED KING ROGSAM...

I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT, BUT ONE DAY HE JUST LEFT WITHOUT TELLING US.

WE WERE HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS.

I KNOW MORE THAN ANYONE THAT JIGURO ISN'T THAT KIND OF PERSON.

JIGURO TOOK CARE OF ME FROM WHEN I WAS SIX UNTIL I WAS 24.

BUT JIGURO WAS A MAN WHO ALWAYS THOUGHT ABOUT HOW HIS ACTIONS COULD AFFECT OTHER PEOPLE.

HE TENDED TO MAKE DECISIONS QUICKLY,

HE WAS A QUIET MAN WHO NEVER TOLD PEOPLE WHY HE DID WHAT HE DID.

YOU AND EVERYONE IN KANBAL HAVE BEEN DECEIVED.

AUNT YUKA,

BUT HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY OTHERS.

OF COURSE, JIGURO'S SPEAR HAD THE ONE GOLD RING,

BY THE LATE KING ROGSAM.

DECEIVED...?

BY WHOM...?

WHY

HE TOLD PEOPLE I WAS DEAD?

WHY MY FATHER WAS KILLED?

AUNT YUKA,

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW

IT'S ALL CONNECTED TO THE ROYAL FAMILY.

I'LL UNDER-STAND IF YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT.

AND WHY JIGURO HAD TO KILL THOSE YOUNG MEN WHO PURSUED HIM?

IS IT SOMETHING THAT'S STILL HAPPENING TO THIS VERY DAY?

clench

.....

NO.

ITS IMPORTANCE ENDED WHEN ROGSAM DIED.

EVEN IF IT WAS STILL DANGEROUS,

I'D WANT TO KNOW ANYWAY.

I SEE...

drip

YOU WERE TOO YOUNG TO HAVE KNOWN,

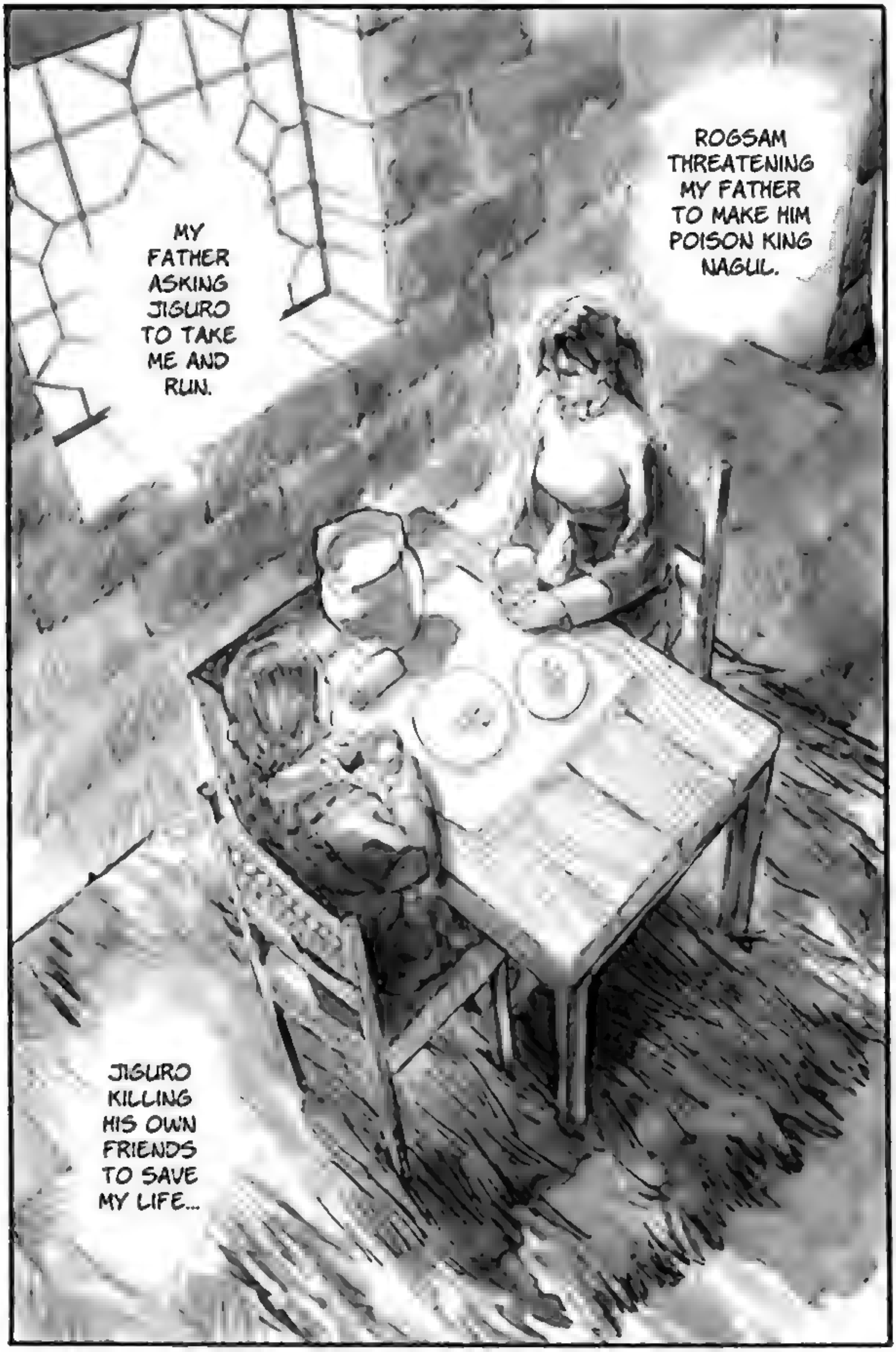
BUT KARUNA, JIGURO, AND I HAD BEEN GREAT FRIENDS EVER SINCE WE MET

AT SCHOOL, WHEN WE WERE IN THE CAPITAL...

WHOOSH

I WONDER HOW MUCH SHE'S BEEN THROUGH...

AUNT YUKA...


MY FATHER ASKING JIGURO TO TAKE ME AND RUN.
ROGSAM THREATENING MY FATHER TO MAKE HIM POISON KING NAGUL.
JIGURO KILLING HIS OWN FRIENDS TO SAVE MY LIFE...

...SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED...

THE WHOLE TWISTED STORY HAS FINALLY COME UNDONE.

I TOLD HER EVERYTHING.

I NEVER STOPPED THINKING ABOUT THE STRANGE CIRCUMSTANCES AROUND MY BROTHER'S DEATH.

HE IMMEDIATELY SEALED THE BODY IN A CASKET EVEN BEFORE THE OTHER DOCTORS COULD SEE IT, TELLING THEM HE DIDN'T WANT IT TO DECOMPOSE, AND THEN HE RUSHED THE INTERMENT.

WHEN KING NAGUL DIED, KARUNA WAS ACTING STRANGELY.

BUT HEARING YOUR STORY REMINDED ME OF SOME OTHER THINGS.

I ALSO THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE THAT JIGURO DISAPPEARED THREE DAYS BEFORE KING NAGUL DIED.

I KNEW HIM WELL, SO I FELT SOMETHING WAS WRONG.

HE WAS KILLED.

JUST WHEN I WAS ABOUT TO ASK HIM WHAT THE HELL WAS GOING ON,

AND THEN THE NEXT DAY, KARUNA TOLD ME THAT YOU HAD DIED.

IT WAS AS IF HE STOLE THE GOLD RINGS KNOWING THE KING WAS GOING TO DIE.

...AND NOW TO FIND OUT IT WAS BECAUSE OF KING ROGSAM...

I WAS TERRIFIED WHEN I SAW HIS BODY.

I COULD SENSE SOME DIABOLICAL INTENT FROM THE WAY HE WAS KILLED.

CREAK

I'VE BEEN WONDERING SINCE WE MET AT THE GATE...

IS THAT JIGURO'S SPEAR?

JIGURO MADE THIS FOR ME WHEN I WAS TEN.

NO,

WHEN JIGURO DIED, I HAD THE PATTERN FROM HIS SPEAR

COPIED INTO MINE.

I'VE REPLACED THE SPEARHEAD A FEW TIMES, BUT THE BODY IS VERY DURABLE,

SO I'VE NEVER HAD TO REPLACE IT.

WHAT A CRUEL,

CRUEL LIFE...

...FOR A TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL TO CARRY SUCH A HEAVY SPEAR...

IT'S A LOT HEAVIER THAN IT LOOKS.

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT. A BLUNT, TACTLESS MAN LIKE YOU...

RAISING A YOUNG GIRL ALL ON YOUR OWN.

JIGURO...

YOU DID WELL IN RAISING AND PRO-TECTING BALSA.

YEAH.

THERE WAS NO MAN LESS SUITED TO RAISING A LITTLE GIRL THAN JIGURO.

SNIF

HAHA, POOR JIGURO. IT'S NOT ALL HIS FAULT.

YOU WERE BORN A TOMBOY. YOU PUT ALL THOSE BOYS TO SHAME!

HAHAHA!

THAT'S WHY I GREW UP TO BE SO UNLADY-LIKE.

clench
IF JIGURO HAD BEEN BY HIMSELF, I'M SURE HE WOULD HAVE GONE BACK TO KANBAL AND CONFRONTED KING ROGSAM.
BUT HE WAS WITH A YOUNG BALSA..
I'M SURE HE FELT SUCH PAIN, TORN BETWEEN BALSA
AND THE PURSUERS WHO WERE ONCE HIS FRIENDS.

.....

AND BALSA SAW JIGURO LIKE THAT.
SHE LIVED A LIFE SEEING HIM KILL HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS FOR HER, ONE BY ONE.

SHE WAS SO YOUNG...

(Jeong Punch)

LAST FALL, I WAS ASKED TO PROTECT A CHILD WHO WAS BURDENED WITH A STRANGE FATE.

THE SECOND PRINCE OF NEW YOGO, CHAGUM,

HAD BECOME THE GUARDIAN OF THE WATER SPIRIT'S EGG...

EVEN AS I RISKED MY LIFE ON THAT HARROWING JOB PRO-TECTING CHAGUM,

WHILE I WAS HIS BODY-GUARD,

I REALIZED SOMETHING STRANGE.

...I WAS REALLY, TRULY HAPPY.

I WAS HAPPY.

LIVING A LIFE LIKE THAT WASN'T SO BAD.

WHENEVER I THOUGHT ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO DIED SO THAT I COULD LIVE MY LIFE,

I DIDN'T THINK I DESERVED TO HAVE ANY DREAMS OF MY OWN.

BUT WHEN I MET CHAGUM, I REALIZED HOW STUPID I WAS BEING.

THAT JIGURO GAVE ME.

JIGURO WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN HAPPY IF I CONTINUED LIVING LIKE THAT.

NOW I THINK THAT I SHOULD LIVE AND ENJOY THE LIFE...

RUSTLE

BUT

I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO SETTLE DOWN.

I FEEL LIKE THERE ARE DEBTS I'VE FORGOTTEN TO REPAY.

THAT'S WHY I RETURNED TO KANBAL.

BACK TO WHERE HE DISAPPEARED FROM, TO END IT WHERE IT BEGAN.

TO BRING BACK JIGURO'S STORY TO KANBAL.

CLATTER

flicker

flicker

...THEN MAYBE I CAN FINALLY LET GO OF JIGURO'S SOUL.

...I FEEL LIKE I'VE LIVED 25 YEARS IN ONE DAY.

WE HAVE A LOT MORE TO TALK ABOUT, BUT I'M HUNGRY.

CAN YOU LEND ME A HAND?

LET'S MAKE DINNER.

FLUTTER

FLUTTER

ARE YOU PLANNING TO CLEAR JIGURO'S NAME?

SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?

AND TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, THAT PLOT HAPPENED SO LONG AGO

THAT I HAVE NO DESIRE TO REVISIT IT NOW.

I'M NOT SURE.

EVEN IF I WANTED REVENGE, ROGSAM IS ALREADY DEAD.

I'D LIKE TO TELL THEM WHAT REALLY HAPPENED...

IF JIGURO STILL HAS FAMILY MEMBERS THAT CARE ABOUT HIM,

I UNDER-STAND HOW YOU FEEL,

BUT I DON'T THINK HE HAS ANY FAMILY MEMBERS WHO CARE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM.

.....

HM... THAT'S STRANGE.

HIS OLDER BROTHER KAGURO AND YOUNGER BROTHER YUGURO...

AND HIS SISTER WAS STILL YOUNG WHEN HE FLED,

HIS PARENTS DIED BEFORE ALL THAT HAPPENED,

SO SHE PROBABLY DOESN'T REMEMBER HIM.

YOU SAID

THAT JIGURO DIED FROM AN ILLNESS, RIGHT?

clink

ARE YOU SURE?

THEN WHY DID YUGURO MUSA...

...IF JIGURO DIDN'T STEAL THE GOLD RINGS AND RUN,

WHAT IS?

JIGURO!!

JIGURO-OOOO!!

YES.

I AND MY HEALER AND CHILDHOOD FRIEND TANDA WATCHED OVER HIM AS HE DIED.

I DO REMEMBER A MAN NAMED YUGURO, BUT HE WASN'T ONE OF THE MEN WHO TRIED TO KILL HIM.

HE DIDN'T DIE FROM HIS WOUNDS WHILE FIGHTING YUGURO?

YUGURO...? NO, HE DIDN'T.

HE KILLED JIGURO AND RETURNED WITH ALL NINE OF THE STOLEN GOLD RINGS.

BUT THE LAST ONE WHO WENT AFTER HIM WAS HIS YOUNGER BROTHER YUGURO.

YOUNG MEN FROM EACH OF THE EIGHT CLANS DIED AT JIGURO'S HAND,

THAT CAN'T BE...

HE'S NOW HAILED AS A HERO OF KANBAL, AND HAS A GREAT DEAL OF INFLUENCE OVER ALL OF THE CLANS.

.....

THAT SUMMER, WHEN KING ROGSAM KNEW HE DIDN'T HAVE LONG TO LIVE, HE EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE FOR HIS SON RADALLE TO SUCCEED HIS THRONE.

IT WAS THAT SPRING WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT KING ROG-SAM'S ILLNESS WAS FATAL.

...NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, A LOT OF THINGS HAPPENED THE YEAR YUGURO CAME BACK.

AAAAAAAH

THEY HELD A LAVISH FESTIVAL IN THE CAPITAL.

I WAS THERE TOO, SO I REMEMBER IT WELL.

YUGURO CAME BACK WITH THE GOLDEN RINGS

ONLY A MONTH BEFORE KING ROGSAM DIED.

MAYBE THEIR SCHEME

AND DECLARED THAT A NEW BOND BETWEEN THE NINE CLANS AND THE ROYAL FAMILY HAD BEEN BORN.

KING ROGSAM TOOK THE HANDS OF THE FUTURE KING RADALLE AND THE HERO YUGURO,

RAN DEEPER THAN YOU THOUGHT.

...BALSA.

Yami no Moribito

"Guardian of the Darkness"

By Uehashi Nahoko

Illustrated by Yuu

Scanlation:
Lovely Strange Dark
LSD.mangadex.com

Chapter Five

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QC: Ianu

YAMI NO MORIBITO
CHAPTER 5

COULD IT BE HIS...?

KAGURO... WHO DO YOU MEAN?

glare

.....

THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN SELL THAT GEM IS THE KING OF KANBAL.

THAT STONE IS THE TREASURE OF KANBAL.

SO, ABOUT THE LUISHA.

WAIT.

RUSTLE

YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE IT.

Ah...

OUR WHOLE FAMILY CAN LIVE ON 3,000 NAL FOR TWO YEARS!

TH-THAT MUCH?!

PRESS

IT'S NOTHING COMPARED TO THE ACTUAL VALUE OF THE LUISHA, BUT TAKE THIS 3,000 NAL.

NOD

BUT YOU HAVE TO SWEAR THAT YOU WON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT THE LUISHA AND THE FEMALE TRAVELER.

TELL THEM THAT YOU AND GINA FOUND A LYOKUHAKU STONE IN THE RIVER AND BROUGHT IT TO ME.

NOW I'LL GIVE YOU A STORY YOU CAN TELL EVERYONE TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE.

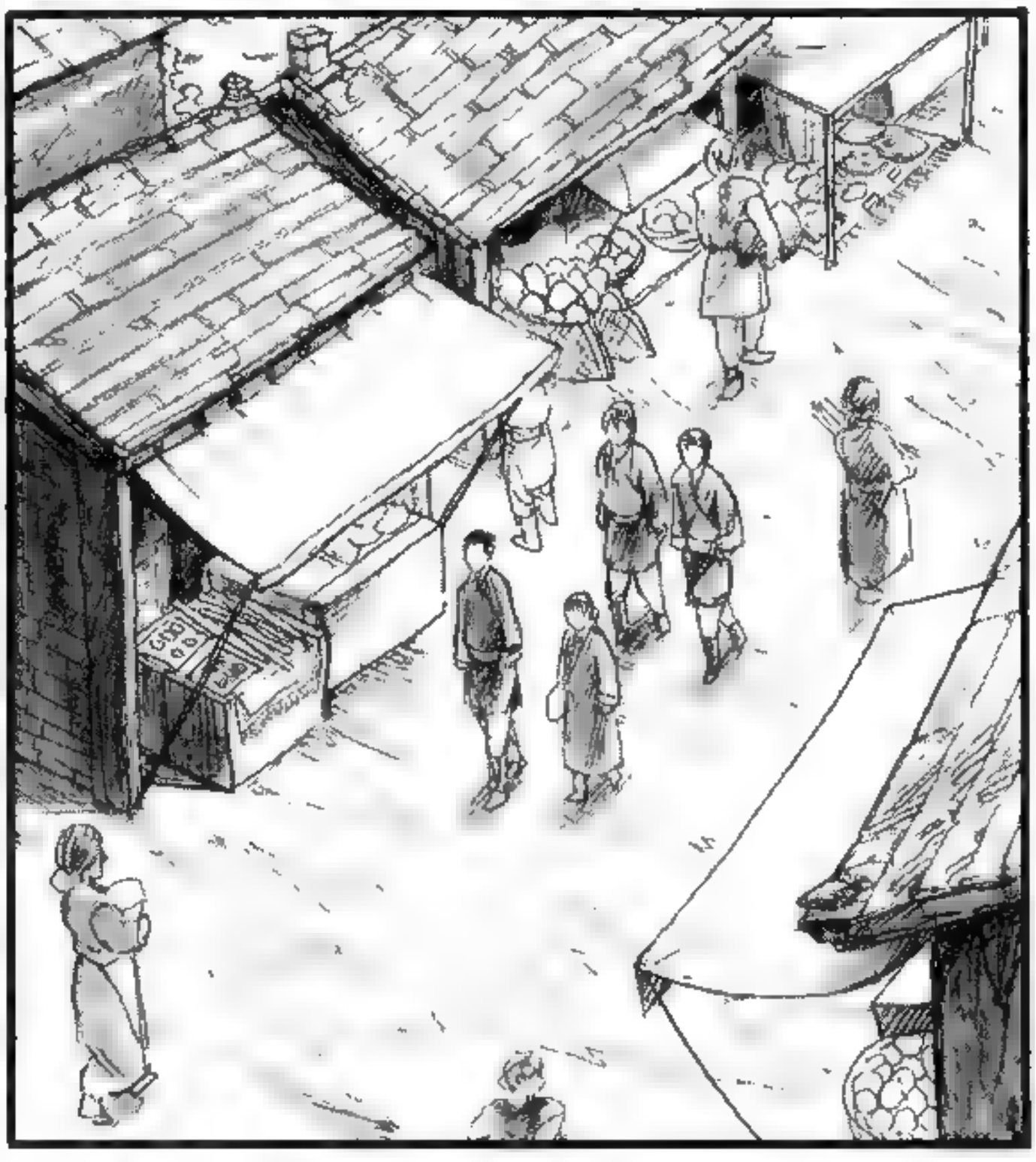
lyokuhaku = a precious milky green stone

I'LL GIVE YOU BOTH SOME POCKET MONEY, TOO!
200 nal!!

Yeah!
Woohoo!
3,000 nal!!

chirp
chirp
chirp

AND THAT TOO!
LET'S EAT THIS...
MY TREAT!



HOW LUCKY!

I HEARD ALL ABOUT IT. YOU FOUND A LYOKUHAKU, DIDN'T YOU?

DELICIOUS!

THANKS, KASSA!

AND WE STILL HAVE A LOT OF POCKET MONEY LEFT!

HE'LL BE AT HOME ALL WINTER. IT'S LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE.

NOW DAD WON'T HAVE TO LEAVE TOWN FOR WORK THIS YEAR.

OH, YEAH. I SHOULD BUY SOME FOR THE SHEPHERDS, TOO.

EVEN THOUGH THE SHEPHERDS SERVE THE WARRIORS, WE ACTUALLY HAVE MORE OF A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER.

WARRIORS LIKE US FROM THE BRANCH FAMILY HAVE ALWAYS TREATED THE SHEPHERDS LIKE FAMILY.

MOM ALSO WORKS WITH THE FEMALE SHEPHERDS, WEAVING AND FARMING.

I WORK WITH THEM IN THE MOUNTAINS EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL.

THIS RELATIONSHIP HAS ALWAYS EXISTED IN KANBAL

AND HAS BEEN PASSED ON EVER SINCE YORAM, THE GOD OF THUNDER, CREATED THIS WORLD.

IN THE BEGINNING, THE WORLD WAS NOTHING BUT SWIRLING DARKNESS.

FROM THIS, YORAM, THE GOD OF THUNDER, BURST FORTH IN A FLASH OF LIGHT.

ONE HALF OF YORAM IS THE "GREAT LIGHT", AND THE OTHER HALF THE "GREAT DARKNESS". HE IS THE GOD OF RADIANT LIGHT-NING AND THE DARKNESS FROM WHICH IT SPRINGS FORTH.

MURO FROM HIS RIGHT EYE, AND YONSO FROM HIS LEFT.

THE ANCESTORS OF THE NINE CLANS WERE BORN FROM YORAM. MUSA FROM HIS RIGHT EAR, AND YONSA FROM HIS LEFT.

MUTO FROM HIS RIGHT FOOT, AND YONTO FROM HIS LEFT. AND FROM HIS NOSE, NA-

MUGA FROM HIS RIGHT HAND, AND YONGA FROM HIS LEFT.

AND FOUNDED THE KINGDOM OF KANBAL ATOP THE YONSA MOUNTAIN RANGE.

FINALLY, KANBAL, THE ANCESTOR OF THE ROYAL LINE, WAS BORN FROM HIS FOREHEAD

WHEN THE ANCESTORS OF THE KINGDOM OF KANBAL REACHED THE LAND THAT WAS GIVEN TO EACH OF THEM,

GRASS, TREES, AND SPRINGS APPEARED, AND LITTLE PEOPLE AND GOATS WERE BORN.

THE OTHER HALF OF YORAM, THE "GREAT DARKNESS", ALSO BORE THE ANCESTORS OF NINE CLANS AND A ROYAL LINE. THEY FOUNDED THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOM BENEATH THE YONSA MOUNTAIN RANGE.

IN RETURN, THE ANCESTORS VOWED TO PROTECT THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE BECAME SHEPHERDS AND RAISED THE GOATS WHOSE MILK WAS GIVEN TO THE CLAN ANCESTORS.

CRUNCH

HEY! BIG PERSON!

peek

KASSA...

THAT SMELLS GOOD!

Sniff Sniff

hop hop

YOYO!!

WHOA!

I BROUGHT YOU GUYS 30 LOSSO.

SHARE IT WITH EVERYONE!

THEY'RE GREAT AT WHISTLING.

THEY CAN EVEN HAVE SIMPLE CONVERSATIONS WITH EACH OTHER JUST BY WHISTLING.

HIYO HIYO HIYOOU!

GOOD TIMING, I WAS JUST THINKING OF TAKING A BREAK. LET'S GO TO SPRING HOLLOW!

PYUUUIIII

HYOOIIII

KASSA BROUGHT US 30 LOSSO!

GRANDPA.

chatter chatter

WONDERFUL!

HOW IS IT

THAT YOU GOT SO MANY?

.....

Silence...

OH,

GINA GOT LUCKY AND FOUND A LYOKUHAKU IN THE RIVER.

I BROUGHT IT TO YUGURO, AND HE BOUGHT IT FROM US.

I HATE LYING, BUT...

DON'T LET SUCH LIES LEAVE YOUR LIPS.

WHAT IS IT, TOTO?

MY LITTLE KASSA...

I'M NOT SAYING YOU HAVE TO TELL US THE TRUTH, BUT WE DON'T LIKE HEARING LIES.

WELL...

YOU DON'T SMELL LIKE A LYOKUHAKU.

WHY DO YOU THINK I'M LYING?

irritated

YES.

BUT FOR US SHEPHERDS, THE STONES IN THE CAVE HAVE A DISTINCT SMELL.

MAYBE NOT TO YOU BIG PEOPLE,

SMELL LIKE ONE?

STONES HAVE A SMELL?

KASSA BOY.

...THE SMELL OF THE CAVE STONES DOESN'T DISAPPEAR AFTER JUST A DAY,

OF COURSE I WOULDN'T SMELL LIKE ONE.

I ALREADY GAVE THE LYOKUHAKU TO YUGURO.

YOU HAVE A HAKUMA ON YOU, DON'T YOU?

I NOTICED IT AS SOON AS YOU ENTERED THIS MEADOW.

AND THAT'S NOT ALL. YOU ALSO SMELL LIKE A LUISHA.

badump

I DO HAVE THE HAKUMA THAT WE PICKED UP FROM THE CAVE, BUT...

smile

THANKS FOR THE FOOD!

HOW LONG ARE YOU PLANNING TO STAND AROUND HERE?

HEY NOW!

THANKS, KASSA!

THE SUN'S GOING TO SET!

PEEK

PEEK

KASSA BOY.

KASSA BOY,

THANK YOU FOR THE LOSSO.

LOOK, IF YOU CAN'T TRUST ANYONE IN YOUR CLAN, REMEMBER THAT WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.

ANYONE WHO MAKES A GOOD KID LIKE YOU LIE ISN'T TO BE TRUSTED.

NO MATTER WHAT THE REASON IS,

YOU'RE A GOOD KID.

WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE.

I'LL ALWAYS TRUST MY CLANSMEN!

IDIOTS!

WHAT DO THOSE SHEPHERDS KNOW, ANYWAY?!

.....

PAUSE

ABOUT THAT WOMAN ON THE JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT...

THE WAY YUGURO AND KAGURO REACTED WHEN I TOLD THEM

BUT,

IT FELT LIKE THEY WERE HIDING SOMETHING IMPORTANT FROM ME.

WHEN I KILLED JIGURO, THERE WAS A GIRL WHO SAW IT ALL.

YES...

DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT WOMAN IS?

I DON'T KNOW.

SHE COULD BE, BUT I THINK SHE WAS TOO YOUNG.

JIGURO'S LOVER?

CREAK

WHY IS THIS THE FIRST TIME I'M HEARING OF IT?!

WHO WAS SHE?

AND WHAT DID YOU DO WITH HER?

NOTHING.

JIGURO WAS MY OLDER BROTHER, BUT HE WAS A THIEF AND A TRAITOR WHO COMMITTED A TERRIBLE CRIME.

THAT WAS ALL.

I TOLD HER I CAME TO KILL HIM. THEN I LEFT.

JUST TO MAKE SURE SHE DIDN'T ONE DAY SOW THE SEEDS OF MISFOR-TUNE?

SHOULD I HAVE KILLED AN INNOCENT GIRL AFTER I KILLED JIGURO,

WHAT SHOULD I HAVE DONE?

...BUT WHY WOULD SHE COME HERE AFTER TEN YEARS?

A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT FOR JIGURO?

...SHE MUST BE THE WOMAN ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT THAT KASSA MET.

DON'T JUST THROW OUT WILD GUESSES.

WHY WOULD SHE NEED MONEY?

.....MAYBE SHE NEEDS MONEY.

THAT MEANS SHE LEARNED HOW TO FIGHT FROM JIGURO, RIGHT?

WHAT IF THAT WASN'T THE ONLY THING SHE LEARNED FROM JIGURO?

IT'S NOT THAT MUCH OF A STRETCH.

SHE FOUGHT AGAINST A HYOHLU WITH HER SPEAR.

IF JIGURO TAUGHT HER HOW TO NAVIGATE THE CAVE,

THEN SHE MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT OF IT IF SHE NEEDED MONEY.

THERE ARE PRECIOUS STONES DEEP INSIDE THE CAVE...

SHE COULD HAVE GONE INSIDE FOR A LYOKUHAKU. IT'S NOT SO WILD AN IDEA.

AND I'M NOT EVEN TALKING ABOUT THE LUISHA.

THAT'S RIGHT.

AND ON HER WAY THERE, SHE RAN INTO KASSA AND GINA.

I SEE...

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, KASSA DID SAY

THAT THE WOMAN WAS USING THE PATTERN IN HER SPEAR TO NAVIGATE FROM NEW YOGO TO THE MUSA CLAN'S TERRITORY.

.....

IT ALL MAKES SENSE.

THAT'S WHEN SHE PRETENDED TO BE ON A JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT AND ASKED THEM BOTH TO KEEP IT A SECRET.

IT WASN'T ENOUGH THAT OUR ENTIRE CLAN HAD TO ENDURE 15 HELLISH YEARS OF SHAME...

HE HAD TO LEAVE MORE TROUBLE FOR US...

WHAT A TROUBLE-SOME BROTHER WE HAD.

IT'S OVER. ALL I DID WAS REMOVE THE DISHONOR FROM OUR FAMILY.

I COULD'VE ENDED IT AND SPARED YOU SO MANY BITTER MEMORIES...

IF ONLY I HAD THIS ARM...

Squeeze

WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO?

ANYWAY, LEAVE THE WOMAN TO ME.

GOING TO THE CAVE TO STEAL A LYOKUHAKU IS A CRIME.

THEN I'LL HAVE HER EXECUTED AS A CRIMINAL.

I'LL INVESTIGATE IT DISCREETLY. IF SHE DID TAKE A LYOKUHAKU LIKE I SUSPECT,

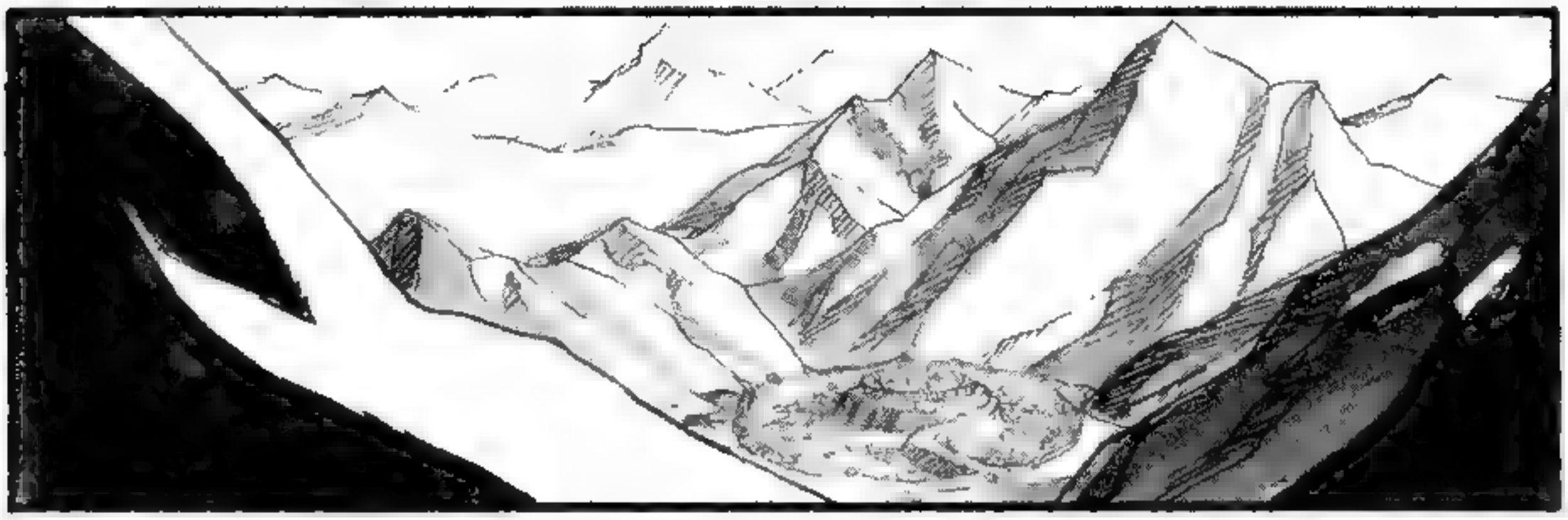
HER CONNECTION TO JIGURO.

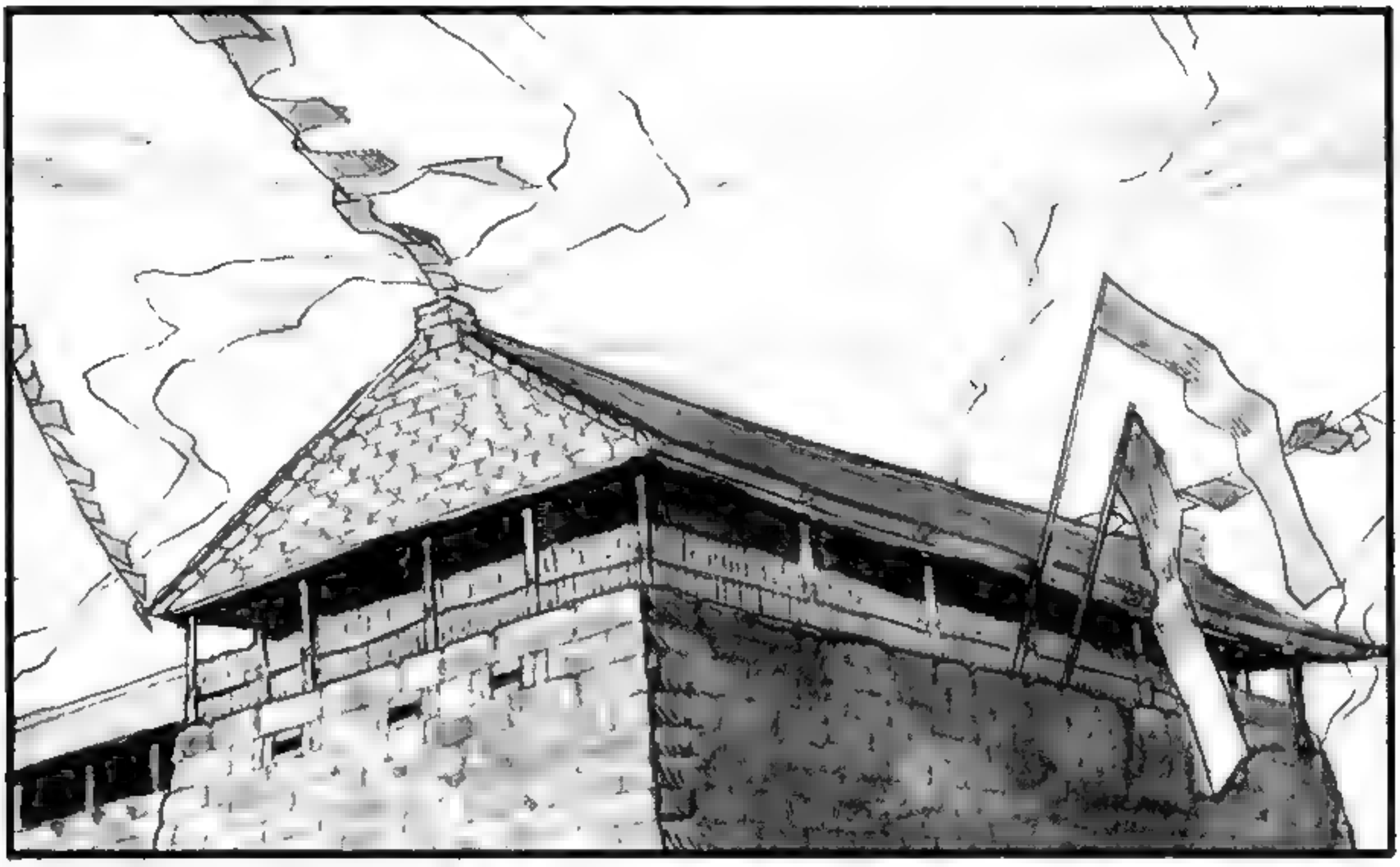
...OF COURSE, I'LL BE CARE-FUL NOT TO REVEAL

BUT...

...YES.
THERE'S NOTHING ELSE WE CAN DO.

...THAT'S OUR ONLY OPTION.
YES.





THERE WEREN'T ANY PROBLEMS DURING OUR PATROLS WHILE YOU WERE AWAY.
EVERYONE IS SO GLAD THAT YOU AND KAHM ARE BACK! THEY WERE UP LATE LAST NIGHT CELEBRATING.

chatter
chatter

JUST CALL ME YUGURO, DOM.
WELCOME BACK, MASTER YUGURO!

DOM,

KAHM.

THERE'S SOME-THING I NEED TO TELL YOU.

KAHM, CAN YOU COME OVER HERE FOR A BIT?

GOOD TIMING.

WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE...?

WE HAVE A BIT OF TROUBLE.

...YESTERDAY, MY BROTHER-IN-LAW TONNO'S TWO CHILDREN WENT INSIDE THE CAVE...

WHAT...!? I'VE NEVER HEARD ABOUT THAT!

...IT SEEMS LIKE A WOMAN CARRYING JIGURO'S SPEAR HAS INTRUDED ON OUR TERRITORY.

WE'LL CAPTURE HER QUICKLY.

IT'S JUST A LONE FOREIGN WOMAN.

UNDERSTOOD.

I'LL SEND OUR MOST SKILLED SOLDIERS AFTER HER RIGHT AWAY.

!!

I TRUST YOU TWO MORE THAN ANYONE.

BUT I'D LIKE YOU AND KAHM TO GO AFTER HER YOURSELVES.

I'M SURE THEY WOULD FIND HER RIGHT AWAY.

UNCLE KAGURO...

KAGURO...

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONES I CAN RELY ON.

ESPECIALLY AT SUCH AN IMPORTANT TIME.

THAT THE MUSA CLAN FACED FROM THE REST OF THE KINGDOM.

FIRST, I DON'T WANT THIS TO DREDGE UP THE SHAME

WE HAVE TO PROCEED CAREFULLY FOR TWO REASONS.

WHEN I KILLED JIGURO, SHE SCREAMED AT ME AND TOLD ME SHE'D GET REVENGE.

THAT SHE'D RUIN MY GOOD NAME...

IT'S TO BE EXPECTED...

THE SECOND THING IS TRIVIAL.

THAT WOMAN DESPISES ME.

I DIDN'T PAY HER ANY MIND BACK THEN.

I JUST LEFT HER THERE, THINKING IT WAS THE RANTINGS OF A YOUNG GIRL...

IT'D BE A MESS TO HAVE MY HONOR BESMIRCHED BY RUMORS.

EVEN IF IT IS TRIVIAL,

YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?

WHEN YOU FIND HER, THERE'S NO NEED TO BRING HER BACK HERE FOR JUDGE-MENT.

IT SEEMS LIKE SHE LEARNED HOW TO USE A SPEAR FROM SPENDING TIME WITH JIGURO.

AND THEN KILL HER.

GET HER ANGRY ENOUGH TO ATTACK YOU,

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT VOLUME.

あとがき

Afterword

以前から上橋先生の作品の一読者として「守り人シリーズ」は大好きな作品でしたので、このようなかたちでバルサたちを描かせていただくことになったこと、夢のようで、コミックス1冊目の節目の今でもまだ信じられないような不思議な気持ちです。

私もバルサやカッサたちと一緒に成長しながらこれからも描いていけたらいいなと思います。次巻もどうぞよろしくお願いいたします。

このたびは手に取っていただき誠にありがとうございました。

Special Thanks

お手伝いしてくださった夏江まみさま、デザインをしてくださったコードデザインスタジオさま

2015・6　結布